

**BEING : A DIALETHEIC INTERPRETATION OF THE LATE  
HEIDEGGER**

**Filippo Gabrio Edoardo Casati**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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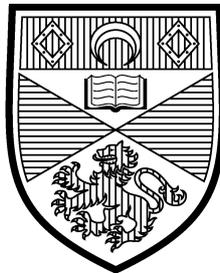
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BEING  
A dialetheic interpretation of the late Heidegger.

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University of  
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of  
PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews

11 – July – 2016

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## Abstract

In my thesis, I present a novel interpretation of the so-called second Heidegger. In the first chapter I discuss the paradox of *being*, according to which talking and thinking about *being* leads to a contradiction. I also show that the late Heidegger endorses dialetheism, accepting the contradiction of *being* as a true one. In the second chapter, I present a comparison between Heidegger and Meinong. First of all, I discuss some similarities between Heidegger's account of intentionality and Meinong's account of intentionality, and Heidegger's ontology and Meinong's ontology. Secondly, I interpret Heidegger's being as a special case in Meinong's 'Theory of Objects'. In the third chapter, after showing that, according to Heidegger, *being* is identical to nothingness, I present a paraconsistent mereological system that makes formal sense of Heidegger's metaphysics. In this mereological system, the totality is taken to be the mereological sum of everything that is and the complement of the totality is interpreted as nothingness, namely what we obtain removing all things from the totality. Since, according to Heidegger, nothingness is *being*, the complement of totality is taken to be *being* as well. Finally, in the fourth and last chapter, I discuss Heidegger's theory of grounding. I show that the early Heidegger endorses a particularly strong form of foundationalism. Moreover, I present two paraconsistent versions of foundationalism (called para-foundationalism 1.0 and para-foundationalism 2.0) that can accommodate the inconsistent views endorsed by the second Heidegger.

# **BEING**

A dialetheic interpretation of the late Heidegger

Filippo G.E. Casati

February 6, 2017



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For my father Giovanni Casati



*Speaking with Heidegger, the Buddhist monk [Maha Mani] said: “ultimately, there is only nothingness. Nevertheless, nothingness is not nothing; on the contrary, nothingness is also the opposite of nothing. (...) Nothingness is – it is nothing at all and everything”. Heidegger agreed with the monk and he said: “This is exactly what I have said my whole life”. The monk: “You should come in our lands [in the East]. We will understand you” (Saviani, 1998, p. 35).*



# Acknowledgment

This work started when my father's life ended.  
Every word contained in these pages is for him.

I would like to thank my mum and my grandmother for the constant, unconditional support. Since the beginning of my life, I have had two mothers and infinite love. A special thought goes to Lucia and Pinuccio: they have adopted me in the most difficult moment of my life. Their smiles and their sweet words have made my life beautiful as Kyoto during the cherry-tree bloom. I thank my two friends: Ben and Gerardo for donating me beautiful moments with indescribable generosity. Last but not least, I thank Ricki Bliss, my beautiful love: she always gave me the strength to continue to fight, accepting me as I am. I hope that I can wake up near her for another hundred years.

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# Chapter 1

## Prelude

In his hut, lost in the Black Forest, near Todtnauberg, Martin Heidegger changed the history of European philosophy. As Karl Löwith pointed out (2011), his metaphysics has had an extraordinary influence on the history of continental philosophy, becoming the center of an evolving debate. Having said that, most of Heidegger's philosophy remains obscure and incomprehensible. This is particularly true for the developments of Heidegger's ideas after the so-called *Kehre*. The expression '*Kehre*' was used by Heidegger himself to refer to the turning point, in the mid-1930s, in which Heidegger abandons and tries to overcome the phenomenology defended in *Being and Time* (1927). Following this distinction, scholars have decided to divide Martin Heidegger's philosophy in two main parts: Heidegger's philosophy before the *Kehre* (also known as 'the first Heidegger') and Heidegger's philosophy after the *Kehre* (also known as 'the second Heidegger').

As we have already mentioned, very often, the so-called second Heidegger is considered inaccessible, obscure and unintelligible. His *Contributions to philosophy* (1989a), a posthumous essay which represents Heidegger's most radical attempt at systematizing his later thoughts, was described as "an idiosyncratic symphony of meanings" (Polt, 1999, p. 140), a "collection of ellipses" and "an assertoric monolith" (Schurmann, 1992, p. 313). Such critiques have been extended to the whole trajectory of his late philosophy.

Beside these stylistic observations, late Heidegger's philosophy seems to be highly problematic also because of its heterodox content. For instance, in the contemporary debate, his endorsement of poetry and philology as a guide for philosophy was often taken to be wrong (cf. Priest, 2015). However, the main issue is that, during the

last trajectory of his philosophy, Heidegger clearly holds inconsistent positions, which intentionally challenge the principle of non-contradiction (cf. Philipse, 1999). Since, according to the majority of philosophers, contradictory statements, as with any other possible violation of the fundamental laws of (classical) logic, are absurd, Heidegger's metaphysics has often been treated as absurd too.

This rejection of the late Heidegger is particularly evident in the case of analytic philosophers, who have focused their attention exclusively on the early Heidegger. On the one hand, the phenomenological account of the human being proposed in the first division of *Being and Time* has generated a vast debate in philosophy of mind and cognitive science (cf. Dreyfus, 1990; Haugeland, 2013; Kiverstein and Wheeler, 2012); on the other hand, Heidegger's early attempt at answering the question of Being has recently produced an interesting debate in analytic metaphysics as well (McDaniel, 2009; Moore, 2012; Priest, 2006, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2015). But what about the late Heidegger? Unfortunately, no analytic philosophers have seriously engaged with it.

The present work tries to fill this gap in the Heideggerian scholarship. It presents a novel interpretation of the late Heidegger according to which it is possible to give a rigorous and understandable reading of his arguments, overcoming the esoteric style. Moreover, in order to make sense of the many inconsistencies of late Heidegger's metaphysics, we show that, at the end of his philosophical trajectory, he endorsed *dialethesim*, namely the view according to which there are true contradictions.

The ideas that ground this work were presented in more than 25 talks around the world. I had the pleasure to discuss my ideas in Australia (University of Melbourne, Monash University), in Germany (Paderborn Universität; Ruhr-Universität Bochum), in the United States (City University of New York, University of Massachusetts, Lehigh University, Ohio University), in Japan (University of Kyoto), in India (Statistical Institute of Kolkata), in Korea (Yonsei University) and, finally, in Italy (University of Padua and University of Turin). I would like to thank all the people that, during the last three years, gave me feedbacks on my research. Invited by Professor Wansing, I also had the invaluable opportunity to teach a postgraduate course about my own interpretation of Heidegger: I thank my students for pushing me to make my ideas both clearer and sharper.

Some of the ideas presented in this thesis are already published. Part of the first

chapter is published in *Philosophy Compass* under the title ‘The recent Engagement between Analytic Philosophy and Heidegger Thought: Metaphysics and Mind’, while the last chapter is forthcoming in a collection of essays entitled *Reality and its structure*, published by Oxford University Press and edited by Ricki Bliss and Graham Priest. Some material of the third chapter has also grounded my critique of Oliver and Smiley’s interpretation of Heidegger’s nothingness published under the title ‘Better than Zilch?’ for *Logic and Logical Philosophy*. Finally, some of my ideas about Meinongianism has been published in *Philosophia* under the title ‘Nonexistent objects as truth-makers’ and they will appear in the first and second volume of the second edition of Routley’s *Exploring Meinong’s Jungle and Beyond* (Springer).

To conclude, I would like to make two remarks about both the translations of Heidegger used in the present work and the formal notations employed in chapter 3 and chapter 4. First of all, since the english translations are famously unreliable, all the translations of Heidegger’s texts are mine. I translated them comparing the original German text, the english translation and the italian translation. All the references come from the italian editions. Moreover, in order to make Heidegger’s language more accessible, I added a Glossary in which some of the Heideggerian jargon is explained. The terms that appear in the Glossary are marked by a star in the main text of my thesis. It is also important to mention that, following Heidegger himself, we write **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in order to refer to the treatment of Heidegger’s being before the *Kehre* and we write **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** in order to refer to the treatment of Heidegger’s being after the *Kehre*. Finally, concerning the formal notation, I would like to specify that, in chapter 3, the arrow ( $\rightarrow$ ) simply represents a logical connective (which has to be read as ‘if . . . then’), while, in chapter 4, the arrow ( $\rightarrow$ ) represents a grounding relation: thus,  $x \rightarrow y$  means ‘x depends on y’. The notation will be explained in more details in the relevant chapters.

The general structure of this work goes as follows:

- **First Chapter: *Sein*.** The first chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I introduce the two main components of Heidegger's metaphysics, namely Being [*Sein*] and the ontological difference [*ontologische Differenz*]. According to Heidegger, Being makes all entities *be* and, since there is an *ontological difference* between Being and entities, Being itself is not an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1927). Then, we show why talking and thinking about Being leads to a paradox. In a nutshell, the paradox of Being goes as follows: since Heidegger takes an entity to be everything we can refer to with an intentional activity, whenever we speak or think about something, we speak or think about a *thing*, an entity. From these metaphysical premises, it follows that, even though Being is not an entity (because of the ontological difference), Being has to be an entity too (because we are referring to it right now!). In the second part of this chapter, we propose an interpretation according to which the late Heidegger solves the problem of Being challenging (classical) logic and accepting the fact that Being is *truly* an entity and not an entity. From this point of view, Heidegger endorses *dialethesim*, namely the metaphysical position according to which there are true contradictions. To conclude, this chapter shows that this interpretation has some interesting exegetical virtues, casting a new light on crucial notions in Heidegger's philosophy, such as the Event [*Ereignis*\*] (cf. Heidegger, 1989a), the truth [*Aletheia*] (cf. Heidegger, 1988), along with his account of negation (cf. Heidegger, 1989a).
- **Second Chapter: *Außersein*.** In the second chapter, we reformulate the paradox of Being in more familiar analytic terms proposing an analogy between Meinong and Heidegger. We defend an account of Meinong according to which every time we speak and think about something, we speak and think about an intentional object (in Meinong's terms, a *Gegenstand*). Moreover, every intentional object trivially instantiates the property of *being an object* (following Meinong himself, let's call such a property outside-being [*Außersein*] (cf. Priest, 2014c)). At this point, the analogy with Heidegger should appear clear: as for Meinong, every intentional object has *Außersein*, for Heidegger every entity has Being [*Sein*]. However, since in Meinong's framework, it is possible to speak and think about something that is not an object, Meinong finds himself in the same situation of Heidegger. Indeed,

if something is not an object, then it does not instantiate the property of *being an object* (*Außersein*). Nevertheless, since we speak and think about that something that is not an object (we are doing it right now!), that something has to be an object too – it has to instantiate the property of *being an object*. Thus, as Heidegger's Being is an entity and not, according to Meinong's metaphysics, something that is not an object, it is an object and not.

- **Third Chapter: *Nichtsein*.** The third chapter is divided into two main parts. In first part, we argue in favor of the identity between Being and nothingness, which is defended by Heidegger himself in his *What is metaphysics?* (1967). Given that Being and nothingness are identical, since Heidegger's Being is contradictory, nothingness is contradictory as well. We also continue the comparison between the Heideggerian and the Meinongian ontology, reviewing some of the contemporary neo-Meinongian accounts of nothingness (Jacquette, 2013, 2015; Parsons, 1980; Priest, 2014b; Sylvan, 195x -1996). From this comparison, we see how it is possible to formally understand Heidegger's paradox of Being and nothingness. In the second part, we present a paraconsistent mereological system according to which Being and nothingness are represented as the complement of the totality for the following reason. Since the totality is characterized as the mereological sum of everything that is an entity, the complement of the totality (which is the mereological sum of everything that is not part of the totality) is not an entity. This is why the complement of the totality represents being and nothingness. However, given the *dialetheic* interpretation of Heidegger presented in chapter one, Being and nothingness are also entities: it follows that the complement of the totality needs to be part of the totality too. Such a mereological system is important because, contrary to a great part of the secondary literature, it shows that late Heidegger's metaphysics is certainly contradictory but not unacceptable. Indeed, since it is grounded on a paraconsistent logic which can tolerate contradictions, the mereological system presented in this chapter is inconsistent but not logically trivial.
- **Fourth Chapter: *Grundsein*.** In this last chapter, we bridge Heidegger's discussion of Being with the current grounding literature. As we claim in the first chapter, Being provides the reason in virtue of which every entity is an entity. Another possible way to understand the relation between Being and entities is that Being *grounds* entities. Nevertheless, since Being is contradictory (as we argue in the first

chapter, being is an entity and not), the grounding relation is inconsistent as well. Indeed, since all entities need to be grounded in Being and Being is not an entity, Being is ungrounded. At the same time, since Being is an entity as well, then Being needs to be grounded in something and, since Being is the ground of all entities, Being grounds itself. Thus, Being is both (fully) grounded and (fully) ungrounded. We call this new inconsistent grounding theory *para-foundationalism*. To conclude, using Bliss and Priest's framework (forthcoming), we propose two formal models that can show how, working in a paraconsistent setting, para-foundationalism does not lead to logical triviality.

## Chapter 2

### *Sein*

**Overview.** *Eĩvai*, *Sein*, *being*. These terms have characterized the philosophical debate since its origin. The phenomenological evidence that there *are* human beings (as there *are* tables, chairs, prime numbers and works of art) has been an inexhaustible source of philosophical interest. Why *is* there such a vast multitude of entities? What makes these entities *be*? And, if they *are* in virtue of their own *being*, what is *being*? In what follows, we discuss the answer given by Heidegger. We show how, in his late production, he endorses the idea that every entity *is* in virtue of being [*Sein*] and that being itself is both an entity and not an entity. In Heidegger's terms, since he takes the world [*Welt*<sup>\*</sup>] to be the totality of all entities, being itself is part of the world (because it is an entity) and it is not part of the world (because it is not an entity).

**Structure.** In **Section 1.1**, we introduce the two main components of Heidegger's metaphysics, namely being and the ontological difference. In **Section 1.2**, we show how, according to Heidegger himself, speaking and thinking about being leads to a paradox. In **Section 1.3**, we present a novel interpretation, according to which, in his late production, Heidegger deals with this paradox endorsing dialethesim, namely the metaphysical position according to which there are true contradictions. In **Section 1.4** and in **Section 1.5**, we argue that this interpretation casts a new light on crucial notions in Heidegger's philosophy, such as truth and negation.

## 2.1 Being<sub>MET</sub>

Freiburg, 18 June 1950. Dear Mr. Buchner, thinking about being [*Sein*] is something very risky and always open to the possibility of mistakes. (...) However, maybe, one day, it will be possible to find a solution among all these attempts that, like mine, look cluttered and arbitrary. For the moment, it is just the pilgrimage of the asking-answering which demands vocation. Please, remain on this path and correspond to the vocation of thinking. Always yours, Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, 1957b, pp.122-123).

Faithful to the suggestion that he made to Mr. Buchner, Heidegger patiently adhered to that solitary path trying to answer the so-called question of being [*Seinsfrage*]: how shall we understand the expression ‘being’? What is its meaning? What is being?

According to Heidegger, the meaning of ‘being’ has been often considered “self-evident” (Heidegger, 1927, p.3) because, in our everyday life, we always deal with it. On the one hand, we are surrounded by entities that *are*.<sup>1</sup> There are rooms, tables, trees and windows. There are concrete entities such as hammers, jumpers and walls; there are abstract entities such as numbers, equations and ideas. In one way or another, all these entities *are*. On the other hand, being is often used in our languages and, in particular, in propositions such as ‘the sky *is* blue’ or ‘I *am* happy’. Nevertheless, from both the fact that we daily deal with entities that are, and the fact that we use the verb ‘to be’, it does not follow that we, thereby, understand the meaning [*Sinn*\*] of being. Thus, the question of being remains unanswered.

Heidegger thinks that being can be understood in two different ways: metaphysically and grammatically. Let’s begin with the former one.

**Being<sub>MET</sub>** : being as that which makes all entities entities

This first characterization interprets **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the *quidditas* (the *that-ness*) of a *quid* (of a *that*). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ‘*being an entity*’ of an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not make this table exactly this table (namely the table that is flat and placed in New

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<sup>1</sup>Heidegger uses different terms to talk about entities [*Seiendes*] (for instance, thing [*Ding*] and object [*Objectum*]). All these terms have different (phenomenological) meanings. Nevertheless, for simplicity, the present work uses all these terms as synonyms.

York); it only makes this table something and not nothing.<sup>2</sup> Even though this “seems just trivial” (Heidegger, 1927, p.4), **Being<sub>MET</sub>** makes all entities be. Such a characterization can be understood in three ways.

[1] First of all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as *Seiendsein\**, namely the *being an entity* of all entities. According to Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** determines entities as entities (cf. Heidegger, 1927, p.13). Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** makes entities entities, when an entity ceases to be, it is not an entity anymore; it is nothing at all. “The lack of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] means the lack of the capacity of enduring of an entity as an entity” (Heidegger, 1966, p.74).

[2] Secondly, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as *Grund\**, namely the ground of all entities, which makes all entities be. In Heidegger’s words, “being [as **Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is intrinsically ground-like, what gives ground” (Heidegger, 1936, pp. 170-171) because it is the reason *in virtue of* which every entity is an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason why all entities *are*. Since all entities are entities, all entities need to be grounded in something that makes them entities, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**; entities can be entities *only* in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and no entity can be an entity in virtue of itself. Thus, as we have claimed before, if something is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is nothing at all.

[3] Finally, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as *Selbstheit\**, namely the *being itself* of an entity or the property of *being self-identical*. According to Heidegger, “the most adequate formula [to express this idea] is  $A = A$  (...)”, which should be read as “every A is identical to itself [*ist selber dasselbe*]” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.28). He also adds that “[the *is* contained in the proposition ‘A is identical to itself’] says why every entity is” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.30). Therefore, not only is it the case that “each entity is itself” (Heidegger, 1957a, p. 28) but it is also the case that an entity is an entity exactly in virtue of the fact that each entity is itself. From the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, understood as *being self-identical*, determines entities as entities, it follows that, what is not self-

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<sup>2</sup>During a conference held in 1955, Heidegger claims that philosophy should not answer questions such as “what is *that* – beauty? What is *that* – nature? What is *that* – knowledge? What is *that* – justice?” (Heidegger, 1956, p.17) because philosophy is not concerned with specific entities (such as the beauty, the nature, the knowledge and the justice) but with the reason in virtue of which all entities are, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

identical, it is not an entity either: once again, it is nothing at all.

Following Heidegger, these three understandings of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are equivalent: since all entities have the feature of *being entities*, all entities are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Similarly, since all entities are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, all entities are self-identical. If something is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is not self-identical either and, thus, it does not have the feature of *being an entity*. It is nothing.<sup>3</sup>

Let's continue with the second understanding of being, namely the grammatical one.

**Being<sub>GRA</sub>** : being as expressed through the copula

This second characterization interprets being as what is expressed by a grammatical component of the language which is present in statements of the form: 'x *is* [y]' (where y is optional). At least in an Aristotelian framework (which is the one employed by Heidegger), **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** unifies parts of the language (for instance, 'sky' and 'blue') in order to obtain a meaningful sentence according to which 'the sky *is* blue'.<sup>4</sup> Without **Being<sub>GRA</sub>**, the parts of the language do not unify themselves into a meaningful proposition, as in the case of 'sky blue'. According to Heidegger, in unifying propositions, **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** expresses both the being of existence and the being of predication. On the one hand, "being [**Being<sub>GRA</sub>**] is found in that-ness and what-ness, reality, the objective presence of something, subsistence, existence" (Heidegger, 1927, p.6); on the other hand,

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<sup>3</sup>Someone could ask why I think that these three understandings of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are actually equivalent. Concerning this point, I would like to draw a distinction. On the one hand, I am not committed to believe that these three characterizations are interchangeable. On the other hand, I am committed to show that Heidegger treats them as interchangeable. Indeed, Heidegger defines **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in these three ways in (1927, 1936, 1957a). Having said that, it is also possible to defend the equivalence of these three characterizations of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** assuming that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is something that all entities have in common. First of all, following Priest, all entities *are* – all entities have in common **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Consequently, he believes that all entities are *in virtue of* **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason why everything is. Moreover, Priest believes that every entity is self-identical because this is a logic truth (see, 2014c). The three characterizations of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are interchangeable: they all refer to something that is common to all entities.

<sup>4</sup>It is important to specify that this is what Heidegger thinks Aristotle claims about the verb 'to be' and not necessarily what Aristotle really claims. For the Heideggerian interpretation of Aristotle and the verb 'to be', see (1966) and (1993). For a complete account of possible other ways of interpreting Aristotle's account of 'being', see Moro (2010).

“being [**Being<sub>GRA</sub>**] is used in all knowledge and predicating” as in “‘I *am* happy’ and similar statements” (Heidegger, 1927, p.3).

Even though the focus of Heidegger’s research is **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, he is also interested in **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** because he believes that the latter necessarily implies the former. Indeed, when we say either that an entity *is* (namely that an entity exists), or that an entity *is* something, we indirectly attribute **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to an entity. If we say that ‘the sky *is* blue’, we refer to an entity (the sky) that instantiates the property of *being blue*; if I think that ‘I *am* happy’, I refer to an entity (myself) that instantiates the property of *being happy*. In both cases, an entity is required in order to be able to say or think something about it. If this is the case, since an entity is required, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is required as well because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes all entities entities. In other words, ‘the sky is blue’ is a meaningful proposition in virtue of **Being<sub>GRA</sub>**, which brings together parts of the language unifying them into a meaningful proposition. Then, the meaningful proposition is about an entity (‘the sky’) which has some features (‘blue’) and, of course, such an entity is an entity in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Every time we employ **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** and we meaningfully unify a proposition, the proposition is about an entity and this entity is an entity in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. This is why **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** always implies **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.<sup>5</sup> Having said this, in what follows, we will be focused on the metaphysical aspect of the question of being, namely on **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

As it has been presented until now, the first characterization of being (which is **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) faces a problem, namely it appears to give rise to a vicious infinite regress. To see it clearly, take into consideration the second understanding of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the ground of all entities. As we have claimed before, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities and all entities need to be grounded in something else. Moreover, no entity can be an entity in virtue of itself. If everything is an entity, including **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** needs to be grounded in something else as well. For the sake of the argument, let’s say that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded in **Being<sub>MET-2</sub>**. However, as everything is an entity, what grounds **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely **Being<sub>MET-2</sub>**, must be an entity as well and, as such, **Being<sub>MET-2</sub>** must be grounded in something else too (let’s say that

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<sup>5</sup>Heidegger believes that language is always concerned with entities and, as such, it always implies **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the reason in virtue of which all entities are entities. He metaphorically claims that “letters are the signs for the sounds of the voice, the sounds of the voice are the signs of our soul; these [namely the signs of our soul] are the signs for the entities” (Heidegger, 1959, p.160). This is way words are symbols (Heidegger uses the greek expression *σύμβολα*), which express or refer to entities.

**Being<sub>MET-2</sub>** is grounded in **Being<sub>MET-3</sub>**). At this point, it is easy to see that we are off on an infinite regress; a regress which one may suppose to be vicious. If **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity itself, then entities are grounded in something of the same kind, namely entities. One may think that this is a problem because, even though a member of a kind can explain why another member of the same kind is, a member of a kind cannot explain why that very same kind is in the first place. In other terms, one may take as reasonable the idea that, in our *explanans*, we cannot invoke that very thing for which we are seeking an explanation. In Heidegger, where **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, the infinite regress is vicious because we are invoking an entity to explain why there are entities in the first place.<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult to say if Heidegger was actually aware of this problem; what is sure is that he avoids this potential issue, stipulating that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is simply another kind of thing than the kind of things that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** wants to explain (namely entities). More precisely, Heidegger stipulates that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not a thing at all. This assumption is called ‘*ontological difference*’.<sup>7</sup> Heidegger assumes that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not a simple entity among entities. “Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] cannot be thought as an entity” (Heidegger, 2010, p.4). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes any entity an entity, but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity itself. In other terms, everything that is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because it is not something – it is not an entity. “The being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities is not itself an entity” (Heidegger, 1927, p.6).

In support of the ontological difference between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, Heidegger

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<sup>6</sup>We do not want to say that this argument (namely the argument according to which, in our *explanans*, we cannot invoke that very thing for which we are seeking an explanation) is necessarily correct. We simply want to point out that, if you think that such an argument is correct, then you may find problematic the characterization of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** delivered above. It is also important to remark that the argument discussed is a common one in the contemporary analytic debate concerning grounding. See Bliss (2014), Passmore (1970) and Lowe (2003). Nevertheless, this idea was recently challenged by Maitzen (2013). As it was suggested by Kris McDaniel in private conversation, it would be interesting to run a comparison between Heidegger’s ontological difference and Aristotle’s argument about the fact that being is not a genus. This topic will be developed in my future research.

<sup>7</sup>One clarification. Heidegger deals with three kinds of ‘difference’: **[1]** *ontologische Differenz*, namely the difference between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and entities; **[2]** *transzendente Differenz*, namely the difference between entities and their ways of being (such a difference will be discussed in section 2.2.2 of chapter 2) and **[3]** *transzendentale Differenz*, namely the difference between a normal entity and God. In this thesis, we will be focused on **[1]**.

proposes a grammatical argument as well. Consider a proposition such as ‘the wall is’. The noun ‘wall’ refers to an entity, namely the wall in front of you or behind me. But what shall we say about ‘is’? If we assume that ‘is’ (namely ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’) refers to an entity, then the proposition ‘the wall is’ would be nothing more than a simple list of two entities: the wall and is (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**). However, this cannot be the case because, in an obvious sense, the proposition ‘the wall is’ has a meaning that a list of two entities (such as the wall and is or **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) does not have. Therefore, Heidegger concludes, the ‘is’ of the proposition ‘the wall is’ does not refer to any entity because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. One can hear the thoughts discussed until now in the following passage:

If we painstakingly attend to the language in which we articulate what the principle of reason [*Satz vom Grund*] says as a principle of being, then it becomes clear we speak of being in an odd manner that is, in truth, inadmissible. We say: being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] and ground/reason [*Grund\**] ‘are’ the same. Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] ‘is’ the abyss [*Abgrund*]. When we say something ‘is’ and ‘is such and so’, then that something is, in such an utterance, represented as a being. Only a being ‘is’; the ‘is’ itself -being- ‘is’ not. The wall in front of you and behind me is. It immediately shows itself to us as something present. But where is its ‘is’? Where should we seek the presencing of the wall? Probably these questions already run awry (Heidegger, 1957, p.15).

The idea that there is a difference between what is the ontological reason of everything (in Heidegger’s jargon, **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) and everything else is not something that Heidegger introduced for the first time. On the contrary, it is an idea that he has inherited from both the neo-platonic school and the medieval tradition. Heidegger explicitly refers to Plotinus and his idea that the One, namely the reason in virtue of which all entities are, is not a simple entity among other entities. Indeed, as Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the One of Plotinus is not an entity either. The One does not have properties, features, characteristics and forms, otherwise it would be something (namely an entity) with *that* property, *that* feature, *that* characteristic and *that* form. According to Plotinus, “when the soul burns of love for the One, it gets rid of all its forms (...). The soul cannot see the One if it engages with entities” (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.92). According to Heidegger’s *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (1995), the same idea appears in medieval mysticism. For instance, Saint John of the Cross claims that God (the God in virtue of which all

entities are because God creates everything out of nothing) does not have properties because it is not an entity at all. Metaphorically, God is the “dark night” in which nothing can be seen, perceived or distinguished because there is nothing to be seen, perceived or distinguished. God is not something (it is not an entity) because God has no form, shape or feature. This is also the reason why Saint John writes: “when the soul meets God, it is without form or shape. Forget and abandon all things [all entities]!” (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.98).<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Heidegger finds a fascinating synthesis of the neo-platonic ideas and medieval mysticism studying Meister Eckhart’s *Sermons*: as Heidegger himself claims in his Doctoral thesis, Eckhart’s ‘experience of life’ [*Lebenserfahrung*] shows how God [*Gott*] is purely transcendental, beyond both the world and the ideas. According to Eckhart, there is an absolute separation [*Abgeschiedenheit*] between God’s divine nature [*Gottheit*] and the entities (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.98). He thinks that, in virtue of the difference between God and all entities, God is nothing, namely God is not an entity or a thing at all. Like Plotinus, Eckhart writes: “when the soul reaches the One, (...) it finds God as nothingness” (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.98).<sup>9</sup>

As Plotinus’ One and Saint John’s God are beyond all entities, because they are not entities at all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is beyond all entities too. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world [*Welt\**] because, according to Heidegger, the world collects only entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. The world is uniquely composed by entities that can be manipulated, used or broken by human beings, while **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be manipulated, used or broken because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity in the first place. Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>** transcends the world. Since Heidegger’s world is the totality of all entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is outside the totality of all entities because it is not an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the reason in virtue of which everything is, including the world itself) is not part of the world. Since the world is the totality of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason in virtue of which all entities are, there is a world in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Nevertheless, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world.

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<sup>8</sup>Concerning the relation between Heidegger and (neo-)platonism, see his courses on Greek philosophy (cf. Heidegger, 1993) and Plato (cf. Heidegger, 1992). Also, see Cimino (2005) and Narbonne (2001). Concerning Heidegger and St. John of the Cross, see Heidegger (1995) and Caputo (1986).

<sup>9</sup>Concerning the relation between Heidegger and Eckhart, see Flaumbaum (1944) and Schürmann (1973). More generally, concerning the relation between Heidegger and medieval mysticism, see Fumet (1963), Lewalter (1950) and Perotti (1974).

## 2.2 The problem of Being<sub>MET</sub>

As it is presented until now, the path taken by Heidegger to grasp the meaning of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not look particularly troubled. To understand why he describes his philosophical attempts to Mr. Buchner with such hopeless pessimism, it is necessary to introduce a new element. In the *History of the concept of time*, Heidegger claims that intentionality is one of the “decisive discoveries” that he has inherited from phenomenology (Heidegger, 1989b, p. 3). Following Brentano and (to a certain extent) Husserl, Heidegger shares the idea that intentionality is the distinctive way in which the human mind is directed towards entities. Every time something is perceived or thought, someone perceives or thinks something, namely an entity. Adrian Moore explains intentionality in the following way: “for any flash of understanding, there is an object of understanding; for any pang of remorse, an object of remorse; for any hallucination, an object of hallucination” (Moore, 2012, p.439).

In the *Wegmarken*, Heidegger claims that the word ‘entity’ “means what is put in front of the perception, the imagination, the judgment, the desire and the intuition. (...) An entity is what is represented” (Heidegger, 1967, p.28). According to Heidegger, every time we refer to something with an intentional act (for example, with our thoughts, imagination or emotional states), this something is an entity. Following Heidegger’s example, when we either say ‘rose’ or think about a rose, we refer to something (namely the rose in the garden); when we either say ‘redness’ or think about the redness of the rose, we refer to something as well (namely the delightful color of roses). Indeed, when “I am mentioning it [when I am mentioning the redness of the rose], I think about it and I represent it” (Heidegger, 1967, p.29). As we have mentioned before, every time we think and say something, something (namely an entity) is thought and said.

As Heidegger claims in *The metaphysical foundation of logic*: “a thought is always a thought about something” because “each thought is related to a specific entity which is in front of us and this entity can be a material object, a geometrical object, or [even] an historical fact” (Heidegger, 1978, p.13). If we think about something, we think about a thing, an entity. If we think about an entity, we think about something which *is* in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. For instance, if we think about Pegasus, we think about an entity with some properties: in this case, we think about an entity which has, among many other properties, the property of *being winged* and the property of *being a horse*. If we

think about an entity, then such an entity is an entity (it has the property of *being an entity*) in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

Moreover, according to Heidegger, “when we speak – implicitly or explicitly – we say being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 25). On the one hand, we explicitly say **Being<sub>MET</sub>** when **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** appears in propositions such as ‘the sky *is* blue’ or ‘the wall *is*’. In this case, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** appears evident because it is explicitly part of the syntactical construction of the propositions in question. For instance, since the sky is blue, the sky is that entity which is blue. Since it is an entity, the sky is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. On the other hand, we implicitly say **Being<sub>MET</sub>** when, in dealing with propositions that do not explicitly contain **Being<sub>GRA</sub>**, we still refer to entities that are ‘*such and such*’. For instance, when we say that ‘the rose perfumes’, we actually say that an entity (the rose) *is* such and such (in this case, it is a rose and it perfumes). Once again, since the rose is that entity which perfumes, the rose is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Regardless the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is explicitly or implicitly stated, “speaking [*Die Sage*] makes appear an entity in its being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 25). “The power of words is to make an entity an entity” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 25).

So, “‘God *is*’, ‘the conference *is* (in the classroom)’, ‘the cup *is* silvery’ and ‘the book *is* mine’ ” (Heidegger, 1966, p. 93).<sup>10</sup> All these entities are entities, namely they are something rather than nothing, because they are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. According to Heidegger, even the world, namely the totality of all entities, is (an entity). Intentional acts are certainly directed towards very different kinds of entities (God, a conference venue, the cup of coffee on my desk, the copy of *Being and Time* in my bag and the world we are in), but all of them are still directed towards entities: as such, these entities are entities in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the meaning of which needs to be understood as “the simple presence [*Anwesenheit\**] of an entity, the objecthood of an object” (Heidegger,

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<sup>10</sup>Someone may find it strange that, according to Heidegger, God is something (namely an entity) rather than nothing, and that God is in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Let me try to explain why, in Heidegger’s framework, this is not strange at all. According to Heidegger, God, in the Western metaphysical tradition, is (treated as) an entity. Even though God is characterized as a ‘super-entity’, namely as a powerful, omniscient and eternal entity, God is still an entity (see Heidegger, 1995; Heidegger, 1967, Chapter 1 and Heidegger, 1957a). This idea is consistent with the interpretation of Heidegger’s metaphysics, given in the present chapter. Since Heidegger believes that everything we can refer to is an entity and since we can refer to God, then God is an entity. This is also the reason why, God is something (namely an entity) and not nothing. Finally, since every entity is in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and since God is an entity, God is in virtue **Being<sub>MET</sub>** too. See also Galimberti, 2011, Chapter 27 and Vannini, 2007.

1966, p. 101). After *Being and Time*, Heidegger also starts to use *Anwesenheit*\* as a synonymous of *Präsenz* and, according to some interpreters (cf. Volpi, 2010; cf. Carman, 2003), this term is read, at least in the phenomenological tradition, as ‘being represented by a subject’ or ‘being present to the consciousness of a subject’. Whatever we refer to with an intentional activity is an entity and whatever we refer to is an entity in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words, whatever is represented is an entity; whatever is an entity is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. This is why “thinking is always representing [*Vorstellen*] something [namely an entity]” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 31). From the beginning to the end of his philosophical career, Heidegger explicitly endorsed this position in many different places (Heidegger 1927; Heidegger 1957b; Heidegger 1966; Heidegger 1967).<sup>11</sup>

Working with this definition of ‘entity’, Heidegger also claims that it is impossible to have empty terms because all terms, as all thoughts, refer to something.<sup>12</sup> “Speaking and thinking necessarily objectify because they have to posit an entity to express something” (Heidegger, 1967, p.30). ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’ is not an exception. “The word ‘being’ [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] cannot be an empty one [either]” (Heidegger, 1966, p.89). Exactly this realization turns any attempt of speaking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into that dangerous and risky path described by Heidegger to Mr. Buchner. Indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is supposed to determine an entity as an entity without being an entity. Nevertheless, in saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** determines an entity as an entity, we represent **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as ‘*such and such*’ and this is enough to turn it into what, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not at all, namely an entity.

If it is true that, for any thought, there is an entity that is thought, thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** means that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is already treated as an entity, namely the entity that we think about in thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Even the ontological difference becomes paradoxical because stating that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity makes **Being<sub>MET</sub>** an entity. In saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, we actually state something about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. The fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity turns **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into an entity, namely the entity that is not an entity.

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<sup>11</sup>Heidegger is explicit about the meaning of the word ‘entity’ in his course on Kant. He writes: “God is an entity because God is, in general, something – an *X*. In the same way, a number is an entity: faith and devotion are entities too. (...) Everything that is something and not nothing is an entity” (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 13).

<sup>12</sup>Against the interpretation supported by Oliver and Smiley (2013), I have extensively shown that Heidegger does not accept empty terms in my ‘Better than Zilch?’ (2015a).

Any statement or thought about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot really be about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because this would necessarily imply that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity while, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not. If **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is something, namely the entity that is not an entity. Any thought turns **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into an entity.

Consider what we have previously stated at the end of Section 1.1. According to Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world because the world is the totality of all entities and, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. However, since everything we refer to is an entity and since we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not part of the world, we turn **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into that entity which is not part of the world. Thus, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is that entity that is not part of the world and since the world is the totality of all entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has to be part of the world too. On the one hand, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world because, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. On the other hand, since we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well and, as such, it is part of the world. As soon as we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is dragged into the world as what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not, namely an entity.

Heidegger is perfectly aware of this problem. Nothing can be neither said of nor thought about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, not even that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be neither spoken of nor thought. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is neither effable nor thinkable. However, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is exactly what cannot be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because it is not an entity.

The being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities ‘is’ not itself an entity. The first philosophical step in understanding the problem of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] consists in avoiding telling the *myth on tina diegeishai*, in not ‘telling a story’, that is, not determining entities as entities by tracing them back in their origins to another entity – as if being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] had the character of a possible entity (Heidegger, 1927, p.5).

This realization undermines his entire phenomenological project devoted to the understanding of the relation between the human being [*Dasein*\*] and **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. The human being is supposed to be the only entity which is able to ask the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. However, asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (asking what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is) is already asking about something other than **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** assumes that there is something (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) that can be questioned. In order to be

something, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has to be an entity, namely that entity which is questioned by the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. However, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, it cannot be that entity which is questioned either. Since the price of referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reification of it and since the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** already refers to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not ask about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but about something else.<sup>13</sup> In Heidegger's words,

as a seeking, questioning needs prior guidance from what it seeks. The meaning of being must already therefore be available to us in a certain way. We intimated that we are always already involved in an understanding of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]. From this grows the explicit question of the meaning of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] and the tendency towards its concept. We do not *know* what 'being' [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] means. But already, when we ask, 'What *is* being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]?' we stand in an understanding of the 'is' without being able to determine conceptually what the 'is' means (Heidegger, 1927, p.4).

At this point, Heidegger is aware that both speaking and thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** leads him to face a contradiction. Indeed, by the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is taken to be not an entity; however, since an entity is everything we can refer to and since we are referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** right now, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has to be an entity as well. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because we refer to it) and not an entity (because, by assumption, it is not). As we have already stated above, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world because the world is the totality of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity; nonetheless, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is part of the world because the world is the totality of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity.

Recently some analytic philosophers have realized that the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as a logical paradox. Adrian Moore, in his *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*, takes Heidegger's philosophy to be one of "the most general attempt[s] of making sense of things" (Moore, 2012, p.1). Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason why all

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<sup>13</sup>Following Priest (2006), it is possible to clarify this point and, more generally, the ontological difference running a comparison with Frege. According to Frege, one needs to distinguish between objects (the ontological correlate of names) and concepts (the ontological correlate of predicates). The difference is that concepts are unsaturated (inherently gappy). Frege needs to appeal to this fact to explain unity of propositions. By analogy, we can say that beings (entities) are objects and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is a concept.

entities are, Moore interprets Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the most general attempt of making sense of every thing. The issue is that, according to Moore, "to make sense of things at the highest level of generality (...) is to make sense of things in terms of what it is to make sense of things" (Moore, 2012, p.7). This makes Heidegger's metaphysics self-referential because, not only does he aim to make sense of every entity appealing to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, but he also wants to make sense of what makes sense of every entity, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself. At this point, as it is often the case when self-referentiality is involved, Heidegger faces a paradox. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes sense of every entity. Since, following Moore, Heidegger's metaphysics is the most general attempt of making sense of things, Heidegger legitimately aims to make sense of what makes sense as well; in Heidegger's case, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself. Nonetheless, exactly this self-referential attempt of making sense of what makes sense triggers the problem because, as we have anticipated, in talking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as something that makes sense of everything, we actually refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as that entity which makes sense of everything. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because it is that thing which makes sense of all things) and not (because, according to Heidegger's ontological difference, it is not a thing at all). This is the contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

The logical structure of the antinomy faced by Heidegger clearly emerges in Priest's interpretation. He spells out the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as a denotational paradox: if there is something (let's say  $X$ ) that we cannot denote, then there is something that we cannot refer to. However, don't we denote  $X$  as soon as we claim that  $X$  cannot be denoted? In other words, don't we refer to  $X$  as soon as we claim that we cannot refer to  $X$ ? To make it clearer, let's briefly take into consideration a specific instantiation of the same kind of paradox, namely König's paradox. Such a paradox is about ordinals, which are numbers that extend the familiar counting numbers, 0, 1, 2, ..., beyond the finite. This means that, after all the finite numbers, there is a next,  $\omega$ , and then a next,  $\omega + 1$ , and so on. As it can be shown by a rigorous mathematical proof, there are many more ordinals than can be referred to by names of a language with a finite vocabulary, such as English. Thus, there are ordinals to which we cannot refer. Now, the problem occurs when, for example, we take into consideration the least ordinal number we cannot refer to. However, despite the fact that it should be impossible to refer to the least ordinal, the phrase 'the least ordinal we cannot refer to' does refer to something, namely the least ordinal number. Thus, the paradoxical conclusion is that we cannot refer to the least

ordinal number but, at the same time, we can.

According to Priest (2015), the problem concerning **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is exactly the same. Following Heidegger, every time we refer to something, we refer to an entity. Since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not an entity, it follows that it is impossible to refer to it. However, as in the case of the least ordinal, as soon as we claim that it is impossible to refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, we do, in fact, refer to it. As with König's paradox, we cannot refer to the least ordinal number but, at the same time, we can, so too with Heidegger's paradox in which we cannot refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub> but, at the same time, we can. More formally, such a paradox can be presented in the following way. According to Priest (2015), an intuitively correct principle of denotation is the so-called D-schema: '*a*' denotes *x* iff  $a = x$ . For instance, 'Socrates' denotes Plato's teacher iff Socrates is Plato's teacher. Now, since according to the ontological difference, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> (let's call it *b*) is not an entity,  $\neg\exists x(x = b)$ , it also follows that  $\forall x(x \neq b)$ . If '*n*' is any name,  $n \neq b$ . By the D-schema and contraposition, '*n*' does not denote **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. **Being**<sub>MET</sub> has no name. We cannot refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Nevertheless, at the same time, we can, can't we? Don't we refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub> when we claim that '**Being**<sub>MET</sub> cannot be referred to'? "One cannot say anything about the being [**Being**<sub>MET</sub>] of an object (even though one can!)" (Priest, 2015, p.10).

In both the interpretations discussed above, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is represented as something beyond either the possibility of 'being made sense of' or the possibility of 'being referred to'. According to Moore, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is beyond the limit of human understanding (because it is impossible to make sense of it) while, according to Priest, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is beyond the limit of expression (because it cannot be expressed) and the limit of cognition (because it cannot be thought). Nevertheless, for both Moore and Priest, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is also represented as something that is *not* beyond the possibility of 'being made sense of' or the possibility of 'being referred to' because, as we have seen, we can make sense of and refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is *not* beyond the limit of human understanding (because we can understand it) and it is *not* beyond the limit of expression (because we can express it) or the limit of cognition (because we can think about it).

According to Priest, Heidegger's **Being**<sub>MET</sub> perfectly fits in a broader class of paradoxes, which share the same following structure: "a certain object must be within a fixed totality  $\Omega$  [this is what he calls the 'Closure Condition'], but must also be without it [this is what he calls the 'Transcendental Condition']" (Priest, 2002, p.245). On the one

hand, given Heidegger's metaphysics, the 'Closure Condition' is represented by the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is within the totality of everything that we can make sense of, express or think. On the other hand, the 'Transcendental Condition' is represented by the fact that, assuming the ontological difference, it is impossible to make sense of, express and think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is beyond the boundary of the totality of what is understandable, expressible or thinkable, but, at the same time, it is not.<sup>14</sup>

Another way of expressing this paradoxical situation is the following one: as Plotinus's One and Saint John's God, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is outside the world, namely outside the totality of all entities (because, according to the ontological difference, it is not an entity). In this case, the totality  $\Omega$  is represented by the world (which is characterized by Heidegger as the totality of all entities) and Priest's 'Transcendental Condition' is represented by the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world. However, overcoming the position of Plotinus and Saint John of the Cross, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is also within the world (because, since everything we refer to is an entity and since we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity too). The fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is within the world (namely within the totality  $\Omega$ ) represents Priest's 'Closure Condition'.

At this point, the aporia of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is clearly stated and Heidegger is perfectly aware that such a contradiction leads his whole metaphysical project to a dead-end. Indeed, the aim of Heidegger's metaphysics is to answer the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and, in order to answer the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is necessary to talk and think about it. However, as we have seen, talking and thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** leads to claiming something contradictory and this makes any attempt of referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** meaningless because any contradictory statement (including the one Heidegger himself claims about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) "offends against the fundamental laws of discourse" (Heidegger, 1966, p.23). According to Heidegger, these fundamental laws are determined by logic, which is defined as "a set of rules" for a good "way of reasoning" (Heidegger, 1998, p.8). Certainly, Heidegger has never directly dealt with formal logic but, for our purpose, it is enough to say that Heidegger thinks that logic is grounded on "two main principles: the principle of

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<sup>14</sup>Priest (2002, p.245) gives also a formal description of the paradox of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** using the Inclosure Schema as follows.  $\phi(y)$  is ' $y$  can be expressed in language', so that  $\Omega$  is the totality of things that can be expressed;  $\psi(x)$  is ' $x = \Omega$ ';  $\delta(\Omega)$  is a claim about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, say that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what it is that makes entities be. Then, by Heidegger's arguments, we have  $\neg\phi(\delta(\Omega))$ : this fact about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be expressed; but Heidegger himself shows that  $\phi(\delta(\Omega))$  by expressing this fact.

non-contradiction and the law of identity” (Heidegger, 1998, p.9).<sup>15</sup> During a conference in Freiburg, Heidegger also added the law of excluded middle (cf. Heidegger, 1994). Nevertheless, among these three laws, Heidegger takes the principle of non-contradiction as the “fundamental law” (Heidegger, 1966, p.9) that is meant to establish which thoughts are meaningful and which are not. Thus, not only is it generally the case that “who ever speaks against logic is suspected, explicitly or implicitly, of arbitrariness” but, more specifically, “this suspicious counts as an argument and as an objection” because “contradictory propositions always offend the fundamental rule of any possible discourse” (Heidegger, 1966, p.112). To conclude, since “logic [grounded on the the principle of non-contradiction] is taken as the tribunal, secure for all eternity” and since “no rational human being will call into doubt its authority as the first and the last court of appeal” (Heidegger, 1966, p.113), **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, as the whole Heideggerian metaphysics, “is contradictory and, thus, senseless” (Heidegger, 1966, p.113).

Since Heidegger does not want to give up any of his metaphysical premises and since he endorses the account of logic previously discussed, he coherently concludes that speaking and thinking about **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is impossible. The only available option is to be silent about **Being**<sub>MET</sub> because “metaphysical conceptions forbid thinking about the question of the essence of being [**Being**<sub>MET</sub>]” (Heidegger, 1959, p.73). Metaphysics finds in the question of **Being**<sub>MET</sub> its end point, its extreme limit. **Being**<sub>MET</sub> remains inaccessible for any metaphysical discourse. As Heidegger poetically writes: “The fog of the world can never reach the light of being [**Being**<sub>MET</sub>]” (Heidegger, 1954, p.49). The light of **Being**<sub>MET</sub> remains unfathomable. Tragically, Heidegger faces the evidence that his whole phenomenological project is self-defeating because he tries to speak and think about what is explicitly established as unspeakable and unthinkable. Then, Heidegger resigned from his philosophical enterprise and, at least until the well-known methodological turn of his thought, he decided to remain silent about **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Such a turn is called the *Kehre*\* and it took place around the thirties.

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<sup>15</sup>Even though Heidegger is not completely familiar with formal logic, he was fascinated by this subject. First of all, before starting his studies in theology and philosophy, he dreamt of becoming a mathematician (cf. Safranski, 1998). Secondly, right after his doctoral studies, Heidegger briefly engaged with formal logic commenting on Frege’s work (see Heidegger, 2007). For more details about the relation between Heidegger and mathematics (or logic), see Roubach (2008).

### 2.3 **Being**<sub>MET</sub>

As we have seen, according to Heidegger, both the aporia of **Being**<sub>MET</sub> and the relative impossibility to make sense of it are based on two main assumptions. [1] On the one hand, Heidegger believes that the ‘*objectifying*’ nature of any intentional activity forbids us to refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub> as what simply is not an entity. Indeed, given the assumption that every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, when we refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub> as what is not an entity, we treat **Being**<sub>MET</sub> as an entity as well. Thus, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is an entity and not. [2] On the other hand, Heidegger takes the principle of non-contradiction as the most fundamental rule of thought and, from this second assumption, it follows that any attempt of referring to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, in virtue of its contradictory nature, has to belong to the realm of non-sense.

For the whole trajectory of Heidegger’s thought, the first assumption was never challenged. Indeed, in the *Appendix of Phenomenology and Theology* published in 1964, Heidegger claims that “every kind of language [or, more generally, every kind of intentional activity] necessarily *objectifies*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.28). What about the second assumption, then? Has Heidegger ever thought to abandon the principle of non-contradiction? Has he ever considered the possibility of giving up the logic? According to the standard interpretation, the answer is negative. Priest is even surprised about the fact that Heidegger has never tried to criticize the principle of non-contradiction. “It is an irony that a thinker of the acuity of Heidegger, who was so critical in his historical heritage, should have been blind to the possibility that people had got logic wrong” (Priest, 2002, p.248). In what follows, we disagree with this interpretation. We show that, after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, Heidegger challenged the principle of non-contradiction, endorsing *dialetheism*, namely the position according to which some contradictions are true.<sup>16</sup>

In *What is metaphysics?* (1967), Heidegger starts to cast some doubts on the principle of non-contradiction. “This [impossibility of referring to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>] is true starting from the assumption that Logic is the most important thing. (...) However, can the

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<sup>16</sup>Following Priest and Berto (2013), we take *dialetheism* to be the view according to which there are *dialethias*. A *dialethia* is a sentence,  $A$ , such that both it and its negation,  $\neg A$ , are true. In our case, we will show that Heidegger endorses dialetheism, accepting as true (as a *dialethia*) that (A) ‘**Being**<sub>MET</sub> is an entity’ and ( $\neg A$ ) ‘**Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not an entity’. For a short introduction to *dialetheism*, see also Priest (2006, pp.4-6) and Priest (2014a, pp. xiv-xvi). For a completely detailed account of *dialethesim*, see Priest (2010).

supremacy of Logic be harmed?" (Heidegger, 1967, p.63). The complete and clear realization that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** requires us to abandon the principle of non-contradiction was not formulated immediately after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup> and it was developed in years of both private and public philosophical attempts. The first essay in which Heidegger seems to endorse a *dialethic* solution to the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** – accepting its contradictory nature – is contained in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. He writes:

The word ‘being’ [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is indeterminate and (...) and nevertheless we always understand it as determine. Following logic, this is a contradiction and what is contradictory cannot be real. Nevertheless, this contradiction - being completely indeterminate and determinate - is real (Heidegger, 1966, p.88).

On the one hand, Heidegger suggests that the word ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’ refers to something that does not have any determination (something about which nothing can be either said or thought because there are no determinations to be said or thought about it). On the other hand, he also claims that the word ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’ refers to something that has some determinations (something about which it can be said or thought, at least, the determination of not having any determinations). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is indeterminate (it has no determinations at all) and it is determinate (it has the determination of not having any determination at all). Most importantly, Heidegger also suggests that such a contradiction is real. The contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is unavoidable and it has to be accepted as true: according to Heidegger, as a matter of fact, such a contradiction is part of how reality is, as all the other real things. At this point, it follows that, since there is, at least, one *real* contradiction, Heidegger must give up the idea that contradictions are always meaningless and, thus, impossible to accept. Nevertheless, even though Heidegger seems to give up the principle of non-contradiction accepting the contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as true, this idea is not consistently presented throughout the whole extent of his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Besides the paragraph taken into consideration here, there are no other significant metaphysical explanations.

Some years after the publication of *Introduction to Metaphysics*, the dialethic solution to the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** was systematically presented in the *Contributions to Philosophy* – a philosophical diary written between 1937 and 1938 but published only after Heidegger’s death.<sup>17</sup> In this posthumous work, Heidegger presents a full defense of

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<sup>17</sup>For a general overview of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, see Schoenbohm (2001), Schmidt (2001)

the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** should be taken to be both an entity and not an entity. In order to stretch the difference between his old consistent account of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the new inconsistent one, he starts to write being [*Sein*] (what we have called **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) as beyng [*Seyn*]. Following Heidegger, in discussing his dialetheic position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, we start writing **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too.

In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger claims that metaphysics needs “a new beginning” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.3) and this new beginning is represented by the introduction of the ‘event’ (or the ‘*Ereignis*\*’) which is “the idea that needs to be thought as the essential discourse of the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.96). In this framework, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has to be understood as what is true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. This is the reason why Heidegger also describes the ‘event’ as the human being’s appropriation [*Er-eignung*] of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. The event itself “is the thought that reaches beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.96). Since the ‘event’ is constituted by the human being’s appropriation of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, then the event itself is always described as “the *space-time* ground of the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.47). If the event is the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, and the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the human being’s appropriation of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, then, since the human being occupies both a space and a temporal region of the world, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is spatiotemporally given as well.

At this point, even though the contradictory nature of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has not been explicitly accepted yet, a dialetheic solution is definitely implied by this ontological account. According to the metaphysical premises of Heidegger (premises that are certainly not rejected in the *Contribution of Philosophy*), thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or, more generally, referring to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) leads to a contradiction. Now, claiming that the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the ‘event’, and that the ‘event’ is the human being thinking a true thought about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, seems to suggest that the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** precisely consists in thinking something contradictory and true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself. This position becomes immediately clear when Heidegger starts to describe the real content of the ‘event’, namely the content of the thought that thinks **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. He metaphorically claims: “*Dasein*\* not only thinks about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entities as two opposite sides of a river but he also thinks about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entities as the

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and McNeill (2001).

same side of the river” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.47). Not only is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** held as the complete opposite of entities (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is meant not to be an entity at all), but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also held as something that is not the opposite of entities (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well). This is the reason why, even though the ontological difference still holds, ensuring the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, Heidegger thinks that, “[as] an entity *is*, beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] *is*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.58). In other terms, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** makes entities entities and since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity itself, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, otherwise it would be an entity. Nevertheless, in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger thinks that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** *is* as well and, as such, it is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too. This is exactly the contradiction that, in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, is taken as true.

In paragraph number 47 entitled ‘The essence of the decision: beyng or not-beyng’, Heidegger directly challenges the necessity of choosing between the **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** that *is* not (an entity) and the **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** that *is* (an entity). Heidegger wants to question exactly this ultimatum (this *aut-aut*): he wants to question the idea that it is necessary to choose only one of the two options in question because choosing both would mean to claim something contradictory and, thus, senseless. He provocatively asks: “Where does this *aut-aut* come from? Where does the *aut-aut* between ‘only this’ or ‘only that’ come from? (...) Is there maybe a third possible way?” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). One paragraph later, Heidegger answers that the third possible way is to avoid the *aut-aut* claiming that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity. As Heidegger himself writes, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is “the beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] of what is not” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). Now, according to the principle of non-contradiction, and given that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground that makes all entities entities, then *either* what is not an entity is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** *or* what is an entity is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Nonetheless, Heidegger suggests that it is also the case that something that is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself) is, at the same time, grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, what the human being realizes is that, according to the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**; however, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too. It also follows that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** makes entities entities, even what is not an entity (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is an entity too. The truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is an entity and not. Heidegger summarizes this idea in the

following way:

as ‘beyng’ [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] does not simply mean ‘being present there’, ‘not-beyng’ [‘not-**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**’] does not simply mean ‘completely disappearing’ because ‘not-beyng’ is a mode of ‘beyng’. This holds for beyng itself which is an entity and, at the same, it is not. It is affected by the lack of beyng [because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] but, nevertheless, *is* [because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too]. (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121).

According to Heidegger, the principle of non-contradiction generates this *aut-aut*, which forces the human being to choose between two options: either **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Nevertheless, according to the truth expressed in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, the human being realizes that this ultimatum needs to be overcome. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is “nothing more than both these two options together” which are one the negation of the other (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). Thus, “beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] *is* what is not” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.58).

The contradiction expressed in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> is metaphorically described by Heidegger as an ‘oscillation’ [*Erzitterung*<sup>\*</sup>] between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, which is generated by the human being that thinks about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, through the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is held as what is not an entity – this is the first extreme of the oscillation. However, as we have already discussed, the thought that refers to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not an entity, refers to something. Thus, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is held as an entity too – this is the second extreme of the oscillation. In the first chapter of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger defines this oscillation as the “essence of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.34). According to Heidegger himself, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not simply one of the two extremes of the oscillation but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is, metaphorically speaking, the oscillation itself: it is both the two extremes together.

The interpretation according to which the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is a contradiction, which requires us to overcome the principle of non-contradiction, is supported in other parts of the *Contributions to Philosophy*. Heidegger is definitely clear about the necessity of abandoning ‘logic’: “the biggest misconception of the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] consists in a logic of philosophy” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.114) because “beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is beyond logic” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.114). **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** needs to be “illogical” or “a-logical” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.114). At this point, the majority of the interpreters have

thought that Heidegger is suggesting abandoning any philosophical enterprise concerning **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**: from this point of view, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not something that can be rationally understood but it must be only mystically experienced. For instance, according to Caputo, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** “is without a why; it is the renunciation of concepts and representations, of propositions and ratiocinations” (Caputo, 1986, p.191). For this reason, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be the subject matter of a philosophical argument or a rational investigation. However, if we carefully read Heidegger, we see that this is not true. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, there is no trace of a mystical revelation: neither the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** nor the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> are the result of some irrational epiphany. On the contrary, Heidegger himself points out that being ‘illogical’ or ‘a-logical’ does not mean rejecting logic *tout court*, but it means rejecting that specific ‘way of thinking’ grounded on the principles of non-contradiction, identity, and the law of excluded middle. More accurately, Heidegger clarifies that what should be abandoned in ‘logic’ is what we have already defined as the fundamental law, namely the principle of non-contradiction. Indeed, even though such a principle claims that all contradictions need to be rejected, according to Heidegger, the contradiction stating that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not needs to be taken as true. From here, it does not follow that, because of this contradiction, both philosophy and any rational discourse about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** need to be abandoned; it simply follows that it is not possible to reject the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because it is contradictory. As Heidegger writes:

An entity is. Beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is. With the word ‘entity’, we do not simply refer to what is real, interpreted as what is ‘present’ as an entity of the mind or as a concrete object (...), but we also refer to what is not an entity as well [namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]. However, if someone immediately finds here a contradiction because ‘what is not’ cannot be an entity, and if someone takes consistency as the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**], does not think deep enough (Heidegger, 1989a, p.97).

The *Contributions to Philosophy* is not the only work where Heidegger supports a dialetheic solution to the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Twenty years after the final draft of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, in *Identity and Difference* (1957a), Heidegger defends the same idea. However, he abandons the metaphor of the ‘vibration’ and he adopts the metaphor of the ‘circular movement’. Here Heidegger explicitly links the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> with the ontological difference, which is now named ‘separation’ [*Austrag*], namely the

separation between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities. He claims that, according to the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, “the separation is a constant circular movement [*win Kreisen*]”. On the one hand, the ‘vibration’ was a metaphorical representation of the conceptual movement between the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (because of the ontological difference) and the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because we refer to it stating the ontological difference). On the other hand, the ‘circular movement’ is another metaphorical representation of the fact that, as soon as we discuss the ‘separation’ between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** turns out not to be separated from the entities at all. This is because we refer to it exactly in saying that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is separated from them. Such a movement is circular because, starting from the assumption that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, we end up concluding that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is indeed an entity. However, since we do not give up the assumption that there is a ‘difference’ or a ‘separation’ between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, we go back in claiming that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Nevertheless, once again, in stating that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, we turn **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** into an entity. As when running in a circle, we always end up back in the place where we began. Exactly this “perpetual chasing of being [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entity” is the reason why “being [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is disclosed as something that *is too*” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.14).

Against the interpretation presented here, someone can object that this ‘vibration’ or this ‘oscillation’ does not constitute a real contradiction because it does not seem to imply that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity *at the same time*.<sup>18</sup> Such a ‘vibration’ or ‘oscillation’ can be given in time and, of course, this would make the contradiction disappear because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** would be not an entity (let’s say at time  $t_1$ ) and an entity (let’s say at time  $t_2$ ), but not together in the same instant of time. However, this is not the case. First of all, this idea cannot be the one endorsed by Heidegger himself, otherwise there would be no reason, for Heidegger, to accept the contradiction of the event of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Secondly, as Heidegger himself states in his *Contributions to Philosophy* and in a seminar about Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, Heidegger does not endorse any kind of Hegelian dialectic where there is the *Aufheben* of the contradiction – a ‘(dis-)solution’ of the contradiction.<sup>19</sup> On the contrary, Heidegger thinks that the two moments of the

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<sup>18</sup>This objection was suggested by Mel Fitting and Stewart Shapiro in private conversation. I thank them for making me think about this point.

<sup>19</sup>As we have specified in footnote number 3 about Aristotle, also in this case, it is important to point out that this is Heidegger’s interpretation of Hegel and not necessarily what Hegel really claims. Some contemporary interpreters think that Hegel’s dialectic removes contradictions (see Berto (2005)

‘vibration’ or ‘oscillation’, namely the fact that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ (because of the ontological difference) and the fact that ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ (because we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) are not given in time. He writes that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is “situated in the instant [*Augenblick*\*] of the fight between either being [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] or not-being [not-**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, namely entity]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.57).

It is also important to remark that, as we have previously mentioned, in *Identity and Difference* (1957a), Heidegger also claims that all entities are in virtue of the fact that “each entity is itself” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.28). This means that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (interpreted as *being self-identical*) still determines entities as entities because all entities are entities *in virtue of* the fact that they are exactly what they are. Any entity is that specific and unique entity that is: the reason for an entity to be an entity is its *being identical to itself*. However, from this characterization of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, it also follows that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical and not. In other terms, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not only contradictory because it has contradictory properties (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and it is not an entity) but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also both self-identical (because all entities are self-identical) and not self-identical (because what is not an entity is not self-identical). In the *Ereignis*\*, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not. Moreover, if we interpret **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as *being self-identical*, then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both self-identical and not self-identical as well.

To conclude, Heidegger endorses the position according to which there are true contradictions in his *History of Being* (1998b) too. Here Heidegger claims that a contradiction does not always show that an argument is wrong and fallacious. He suggests the idea that a contradictory conclusion is not enough to reject an argument because “a contradiction is not a rebuttal nor a disproof” (Heidegger, 1998b, p.15). Moreover, since a contradiction “is not always meant to be false, incorrect or unacceptable” (Heidegger, 1998b, p.13), it is possible to have contradictions that are not only unavoidable but also true. As we have seen, an example is the *Ereignis*\*, which shows that “the contradiction is essentially a fundamental proposition about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and its truth” (Heidegger, 1998b, p.13). What is true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is an entity and, at the same time, it is not an entity. Finally, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is interpreted as *being self-identical*, then it is also true that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical and not self-identical as well.<sup>20</sup>

and Redding (2007)), while some other interpreters think that Hegel’s dialectic accepts and tolerates contradictions (see Priest (2010)). Heidegger seems to agree with the first interpreters.

<sup>20</sup>It may be relevant to specify that the only inconsistency accepted by Heidegger is the inconsis-

## 2.4 *Nicht*

Given the metaphysical framework presented in his *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger intuitively understands that the concept of negation plays a crucial role in the paradoxical truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Since all contradictions are the conjunction of a statement ( $A$ ) and its negation ( $\neg A$ ), the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an exception. Indeed, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the event of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, it is the case that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ ( $A$ ) and, at the same time, it is the case that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ ( $\neg A$ ). So, in order to make sense of this antinomy, it is important to understand how negation works. Following Heidegger himself, the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is generally not accepted exactly because “only few people can really understand the meaning of negation” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). In particular, he points out that negation is generally (mis-)interpreted in two main ways: either it is understood as “cancellation, dissolution” or it is understood as “rejection” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). Nevertheless, even though Heidegger clearly suggests that both these two accounts of negation turn the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** into something unacceptable, he does not give any argument. In what follows, we will try to make sense of this intuition.

Let’s start examining the first misunderstanding of negation. In this case, the content of a proposition expressed by  $\neg A$  ‘cancels’ or ‘dissolves’ the content of the proposition expressed by  $A$ . Similarly, since the relation is symmetrical, the content of a proposition expressed by  $A$  ‘cancels’ or ‘dissolves’ the content of the proposition expressed by  $\neg A$  as well. From here, it follows that, since  $A$  dissolves the content of  $\neg A$  and since  $\neg A$  dissolves the content of  $A$ , the contradiction ( $A \wedge \neg A$ ) has no content at all. According to this account of negation, contradictions are contentless: they simply lack any content.<sup>21</sup>

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tency of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1966), he also mentions the square triangle. Nevertheless, it is difficult to establish if Heidegger takes the square triangle to be *genuinely* and *truly* inconsistent, as he does in the case of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

<sup>21</sup>It may look unreasonable that Heidegger refers to such a technical notion of negation. However, since he has deeply engaged with philosophers that have supported an account of negation as cancellation, this is not the case. In particular, Aristotle (which was deeply studied by Heidegger) endorsed this first account of negation. Even though it is fair to point out that this interpretation of Aristotle is not universally accepted, there is reasonable evidence according to which, not only did Aristotle assume this account of negation, but he also accepted the so-called Aristotle’s thesis, namely  $\neg(A \rightarrow \neg A)$  (cf. Routley and Routley, 1984).

Moreover, consistent with the idea that contradictions are without any content, the conjunction of  $A$  and  $\neg A$  neither entails  $A$  nor entails  $\neg A$ . *Ex contradictione nihil sequitur*.

At this point, it should be clear why this account of negation cannot be the correct one to express the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. First of all, according to Heidegger, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, is exactly the realization that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Given this first account of negation, the *Ereignis* (namely the conjunction of the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and its negation) needs to be contentless because the content of the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ cancels or dissolves the content of the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ and *vice versa*. However, according to Heidegger, this contradiction is not contentless at all; on the contrary, exactly because of its contradictory content (namely that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not), it represents the unavoidable truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Secondly, Heidegger thinks that the contradiction which states that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and, at the same time, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ entails that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’. This is particularly evident when he talks about the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>. From the ‘event’ of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, which is exactly the conjunction of a statement and its negation, Heidegger often infers one of the two conjuncts. For instance, in his *Contribution to Philosophy*, Heidegger claims that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is contradictory (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity), then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1989a, p.98). *Vice versa*, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is contradictory (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity), then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1989a, p.98). Working with such an account of negation, this would not be possible.<sup>22</sup>

The second misunderstanding treats negation as a ‘rejection’. In this second case, the content of a negated proposition neither disappears nor it is cancelled, but, using Heidegger’s words, it “is simply ruled out” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). This means that

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<sup>22</sup>It may be interesting to recall that negation, interpreted as ‘cancellation’ and ‘dissolution’, naturally leads towards connexive logic or, more generally, connexivism. This view is known for endorsing the following two theses. [1] First of all, explicit contradictions do not entail their components. [2] Secondly,  $A$  cannot entail  $\neg A$ . This second thesis emerges naturally under the cancellation or dissolution view of negation, as follows: entailment is inclusion of logical content. So, if  $A$  were to entail  $\neg A$ , it would include as part of its content, what ‘cancels’ or ‘dissolves’ it,  $\neg A$ , in which event it would entail nothing, having no content. Finally, since it is not the case that  $A$  entails  $\neg A$ , Aristotle’s thesis, namely  $\neg(A \rightarrow \neg A)$ , holds as well.

the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ *rejects* the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’. The two propositions are, so to speak, incompatible: since the former statement rejects the latter one, it is impossible that they both hold. In his literary style, Heidegger also claims that “this [second kind of] negation says only *no*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). One possible way of interpreting such an enigmatic expression is that, if it is true that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’, the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’ needs to be negative. *Vice versa*, if it is false that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’, the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’ needs to be positive. Given this preliminary intuition, it is possible to see how this characterization of negation can resemble the behavior of negation in classical logic. Indeed, the fact that proposition  $A$  rejects  $\neg A$  may be also interpreted in the following way: if proposition  $A$  is true,  $\neg A$  is false. *Vice versa*, the fact that proposition  $\neg A$  rejects  $A$ , may be interpreted in the following way: if proposition  $\neg A$  is true,  $A$  is false. Thus, if it is true that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’, ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is false *only*. *Vice versa*, if it is true that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’, ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ is false *only*. It should be immediately evident that this second kind of negation cannot be the right one to express the *Ereignis*\* because Heidegger himself wants to claim that both the propositions ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and its negation are true. This is what negation as ‘rejection’ does not allow.

So, what is a possible account of negation that can make sense of the *Ereignis*\*? Heidegger thinks that, at least in some cases, negation should both ‘accept’ and ‘reject’ what it negates. In this way, the proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ neither cancels, dissolves the content of the proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ nor rejects the possibility that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’. In his words, “[negation] should say *yes* and *no* at the same time” (Heidegger, 1989a, p. 189). Once again, it is possible to interpret this obscure quotation in the following way. On the one hand, since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ is true (because we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ) and since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ is false (because of the ontological difference), the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ true?’ needs to be both *yes* and *no*. *Vice versa*, since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is true (because of the ontological difference) and since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is false (because we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ), the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’ needs to be both *yes* and *no*. Following Heidegger, only this negation can express

the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** exactly because it is “the simultaneity of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entities” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.42). Since, in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not, this third kind of negation is able to express that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and its negation are both true and false. On the other hand, this negation says *yes* and *no* because, according to Heidegger himself, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> (namely, the contradiction which states that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’) entails both its conjuncts, namely it entails that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and it entails that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’. Metaphorically, such a negation expresses that, *yes*, it is the case that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and, at the same time, that, *no*, it is not the case that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity.

The recent development of paraconsistent logic can give us a better understanding of this intuitive account of negation. Consider Priest’s *Logic of Paradox* (1979; from now on, *LP*). In this formal system, the classes of true propositions and false propositions overlap. Given a proposition  $A$ , which belongs to the class of true propositions only, the negation of  $A$  belongs to the class of false propositions only. *Vice versa*, given a proposition  $A$ , which belongs to the class of false propositions only, the negation of  $A$  belongs to the class of true propositions only. However, given a sentence  $A$ , which belongs to the overlap of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions, the negation of  $A$  belongs to the overlap as well. So, not only is proposition  $A$  both true and false, but its negation (namely,  $\neg A$ ) is true and false as well. As for Heidegger’s negation, the negation in *LP* says ‘yes’ and ‘no’: if proposition  $A$  and its negation belong to the overlap of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions, the answer to the question ‘is  $A$  true?’ is ‘yes’ (because it belongs to the class of true propositions), and ‘no’ (because it belongs to the class of false propositions). In the same way, since the negation of  $A$  belongs to the overlap of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions, the answer to the question ‘is  $\neg A$  true?’ is ‘yes’ (because it belongs to the class of true propositions), and ‘no’ (because it belongs to the class of false propositions).

As we have already discussed, according to Heidegger’s metaphysics, the proposition expressing the ontological difference (namely, ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’) belongs exactly to the intersection of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions. ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is true (because it is assumed as such by Heidegger himself) and it is false (because, since we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has to be an entity). In this case, the negation of this proposition belongs to the overlap of the two

classes as well because it is both true and false. In other terms, if we ask the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’, the answer is both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. It is ‘yes’ because, assuming the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and it is ‘no’ because, in virtue of the fact that we refer to it, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well. On the other hand, if we ask ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ false?’, the answer is again both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. It is ‘yes’ because, in virtue of the fact that we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and it is ‘no’ because, assuming the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity at all.

## 2.5 Ἀλεθρία

Grounded on this last interpretation of negation, Heidegger gives also an account of truth, which is compatible with a dialethic solution to the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In his *On the Essence of Truth* (1967), Heidegger claims that “truth means what makes a true thing true” (Heidegger, 1967, p.134). However, following Heidegger, there are two understandings of truth: the first one is the traditional concept and the second one is his own. The traditional concept supports the idea that a proposition is true if and only if there is an ‘accordance’ between what is stated by a proposition and the entity the proposition is about. Thus, consistently with a vast part of the philosophical tradition, truth (Heidegger uses the latin expression ‘*veritas*’) is taken to be the agreement of our thoughts with the entity that is thought (*adaequatio intellectus ad rem*) or the concordance (here, Heidegger uses the Aristotelian Greek expression *ὁμοίωσις*) of an assertion (*λόγος*) with an entity (*πρᾶγμα*). In Heidegger’s words, something is true when “the matter is in accord [*Die Sache stimmt*] with what actually is” (Heidegger, 1988, p.136). For instance, the proposition ‘snow is white’ is true if and only if snow is white. Thus, “the truth is the actual” (Heidegger, 1967, p.134) or, more precisely, a proposition is true if and only if it is in accordance with the actual. This is the reason why, according to Heidegger himself, truth is a synonym of correctness because it is about a proposition being correct in representing reality as it is. Using Heidegger’s metaphor, truth is the agreement [*Ubereinstimmen*] between what appears ‘under the light’ and a proposition that correctly (and, thus, truthfully) describes what appears ‘under the light’. Here, what is ‘under the light’ is taken to be the thing (*res*) a proposition is about, or the entity (*πρᾶγμα*) an assertion (*λόγος*) is concerned with. Such an account of truth is the ground

of that specific way of reasoning which is labelled by Heidegger himself as ‘*apophantic*’, namely that specific way of reasoning which is concerned with what appears ‘under’ (*apo* - *apo*) the ‘light’ (*phainos* - *φαινος*).<sup>23</sup>

Given this traditional understanding of truth, Heidegger explicitly equates falsity with *un-truth*, namely what is not true. If truth is the agreement of a proposition with reality, “the untruth of the matter signifies the non-agreement [of a proposition with reality]”; if truth is the accordance with the actual, “the untruth is conceived as a non-accordance [with the actual]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138). If the truth is the agreement of a proposition with what appears ‘under the light’, the untruth is the disagreement of a proposition with what appears ‘under the light’. Metaphorically, untruth is concerned with “what is hidden” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138) or “concealed” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138). Moreover, Heidegger also thinks that, according to this account, truth and untruth are, as in classical logic, exclusive and exhaustive. If the actual is the truth, then “what is not actual [namely, the untruth] is always taken to be the opposite of the actual [namely, the truth]” (Heidegger 1967, p.138). For instance, if the proposition ‘*X* is golden’ is true, this means that *X* is actually golden. In reality, *X* is golden. Using Heidegger’s metaphor, the proposition ‘*X* is golden’ is true if and only if *X* appears ‘under the light’ as golden, namely if and only if the entity *X* appears in reality to have the property of *being golden*. Consistently with the traditional concept of truth, this also means that if *X* is indeed golden, the negation of the proposition ‘*X* is golden’ is false (or untrue). “Untruth (...) is completely the opposite of truth” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138). No proposition can be true and false (or untrue) at the same time. Truth and falsity (or untruth) are incompatible. It is clear that this account of truth is grounded on the second kind of negation because, consistently with the idea that truth and falsity (or untruth) are exclusive and exhaustive,

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<sup>23</sup>According to Heidegger, the Western tradition has exclusively developed the *apophantic* way of reasoning, which grounds both scientific and technical knowledge. During a conference given in Freiburg (2002), he points out that all the different branches of science work under the assumption that everything is an entity only. For instance, biology is concerned with living entities, theology is concerned with divine entities and mathematics is concerned with mathematical entities. However, all of them are, ultimately, about entities. In his lectures on Nietzsche (1961), Heidegger also claims that the *apophantic* way of reasoning grounds the ‘will to power’ of *Dasein*\* because it is possible to have power only at one condition, namely that there is something (an entity) on which it is possible to have power. As it is claimed in *The question concerning technology* (1957b, pp.5-28), technology is the strongest and most powerful form of the will to power because it is grounded on that *apophantic* way of reasoning that, considering only entities, develops the possibility of having power over them.

the negation of a true proposition must be false and the negation of a false proposition must be true.

Unfortunately, there is a problem: Heidegger's metaphysics is incompatible with this account of truth. First of all, according to Heidegger before the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, in the case of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, there is no entity according to which a proposition can be in agreement with because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity in the first place. There cannot be a truth about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**: it is impossible to be correct about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because there is no entity to be correct about. Using Heidegger's metaphor, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot appear 'under the light'. If **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot appear 'under the light', no proposition can be in accordance with **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** either: indeed, a proposition can be in accordance only with what appears 'under the light', namely with what is an entity. Therefore, since a proposition is true if and only if it is in accordance with what appears 'under the light', there cannot be any true proposition about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Secondly, even when, after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, Heidegger endorses the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the idea that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not entity, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> itself becomes incompatible with this account of truth. Indeed, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not, it is both true and false that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. However, since according to the traditional understanding, truth and falsity (or untruth) are exclusive and exhaustive, this is unacceptable because it would imply that at least a proposition (namely 'Beyng<sub>MET</sub> is not an object') is both true and false.

At this point, Heidegger tries to revise this notion of truth introducing what, in ancient Greek, was called *Aletheia* (Ἀλεθεία). This new account of "the question of the essence of truth arises from the question of the truth of essence" (Heidegger, 1967, p.155), namely the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Even though *Aletheia* is usually translated with 'truth', Heidegger, following a philological reading, interprets *Aletheia* as 'what is not hidden'. So, truth is still about the accordance between a proposition and reality (or what is actual); however, this time, truth is not simply characterized as the accordance between a proposition and what appears 'under the light' but it is defined as the accordance between a proposition and 'what is not hidden'. As we will see, here, negation (the 'not' employed in 'what is *not* hidden) plays a crucial role.

As we have already seen, according to Heidegger, reality is not only constituted by what appears, *sic et simpliciter*, 'under the light': the world (namely the totality of all entities) is not only composed by entities (*πράγματα*). There is something hidden, which

needs to be unconcealed; something that, even if it does not belong to the world, lies under it as a necessary condition for anything to be. This is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden because it is not an entity and, thus, it cannot appear ‘under the light’; at the same time, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden as well because, in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, it appears ‘under the light’ as that entity that is not an entity. On the one hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be something that simply appears ‘under the light’ because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity: **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot appear ‘*under the light*’ because there is no entity that can appear (there is no entity that can actually be ‘*under the light*’). On the other hand, according to the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is also an entity and, as all the other entities, it is part of the world. Since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself can appear ‘*under the light*’. The truth of the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** appears and does not appear ‘*under the light*’ (namely the truth of the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden and not hidden) directly follows from the structure of the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>. In an idiosyncratic way, Heidegger writes:

the event of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**], namely the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, supports the truth = the truth is shown through the event [the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>] of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]. (...) The preliminary question about the truth is, at the same time, the fundamental question about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]. Beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**], in its own event [the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>], is essentially the truth (Heidegger, 1989a, p.341).<sup>24</sup>

As we have already seen, the event of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is a ‘vibration’ or an ‘oscillation’ of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself between its ‘being an entity’ and its ‘not being an entity’. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is what is not: it is that entity that is not an entity. Therefore, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and it is not an entity. From the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, it follows that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not appear at all because there is no entity that can appear; from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, it follows that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** appears as an entity, namely as that entity that is not an entity. When **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, it cannot appear), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden as well (because it is an entity and, as such, it appears too). *Vice versa*, when **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and, as such, it appears), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**

<sup>24</sup>The relation between the event and Heidegger’s account truth is better explained in the following quotation: “the event grounds the truth; the truth is given only through the event” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.341). Also, “The essence of truth is the *being true* of Beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]”, which the the event. (Heidegger, 1989a, p.343).

is hidden as well (because it is not an entity and, as such, it cannot appear). The truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the event according to which **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not, is that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is covered and, at the same time, uncovered. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden and, at the same time, not. As Heidegger claims, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** “veils and, at the same time, unveils” **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (Heidegger, 1967, p.149).

Now, as we have seen, Heidegger believes that a proposition is true if it is in accordance with what is *not hidden* (or with what is *uncovered*) and that a proposition is false if it is in accordance with what is *hidden* (or with what is *covered*). It follows that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is *not hidden* or *uncovered* (because it is an entity and, as such, it appears ‘under the light’) and since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is *hidden* or *covered* (because it is not an entity and, as such, it does not appear ‘under the light’), a proposition such as the ontological difference (‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’) is both true (because it is in accordance with what is not hidden or uncovered) and false (because it is in accordance with what is hidden or covered). Heidegger is explicit about this: “the truth is *non-truth* [or the un-truth]. (...) The truth is, at the same time, the *un-truth*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.340).

Abandoning the Heideggerian metaphor, it is easy to see how *Aletheia* works if we consider the ontological difference. According to Heidegger, the ontological difference, namely ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’, is true. However, since we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** in saying that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and since everything we refer to in an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well. Moreover, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, the ontological difference is false. Thus, the ontological difference is true and false. In other words, the truth of the ontological difference is its un-truth (cf. Heidegger, 1989a, p. 324) because what is true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is not an entity) is false as well.

Heidegger is aware that this new account of truth looks “like a dragging up of forcibly contrived paradoxes” (Heidegger, 1967, p.149). As **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden and not hidden at the same time, the ontological difference is true and false at the same time. However, it is also the case that this understanding of truth (*Aletheia*) has to be rejected only by people that endorse the two wrong accounts of negation previously discussed. In Heidegger’s words:

[such an account of truth,] paradoxical only for ordinary *doxa* (opinion), is to be renounced. But surely for those who know about such matters, the ‘non-’ of the

primordial non-essence of truth, as untruth, points to the still unexperienced domain of the truth of Being (not merely of beings) (Heidegger, 1967, p.149).

One possible interpretation of this passage is the following: Heidegger seems to suggest that his account of truth (*Aletheia*) needs to be neglected if and only if we work with the two wrong understandings of negation previously discussed, which, according to Heidegger himself, are wrong. First of all, as we have already seen, these two understandings of negation would either cancel out the content of a contradiction or forbid us to accept contradictions *tout court*. This idea is incompatible with Heidegger's account of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Secondly, according to the two common understandings of negation, truth and falsity are exclusive and exhaustive and, of course, this is not compatible with Heidegger's *Aletheia*, where there are propositions (such as the ontological difference) which are both true and false.

Heidegger himself is explicit in pointing out that the crucial step in accepting *Aletheia* as the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** consists in adopting the third account of negation. On the one hand, the negation contained in *A-letheia*, namely the negation contained in 'what is *not* hidden', should not be interpreted as 'cancellation' or 'dissolution' because Heidegger wants to hold the position according to which it is true that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is hidden (because it is not an entity and, thus, it cannot appear as such) and not hidden (because it is an entity and, thus, it appears as such). According to the negation understood as 'cancellation' or 'dissolution', this contradiction has no content at all. Nevertheless, as we have seen before, Heidegger holds the view that exactly the content of this contradiction is true. Secondly, the negation used in *A-letheia* (namely in 'what is *not* hidden') cannot be interpreted as 'rejection' either because, on the contrary of what classical negation would allow, from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden, Heidegger does not want to infer that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden *only* and, *vice versa*, from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden, Heidegger does not want to infer that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden *only*. Once again, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> is that *conicidentia oppositorum* of 'being hidden' and 'not being hidden', which is unacceptable given a classical account of negation. Finally, Heidegger appeals to the third kind of negation. Since Heidegger's negation affirms and rejects at the same time (since it says 'yes' and 'no'), what is 'not hidden' (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself) is both hidden and not hidden.

This is also the reason why, according to his account of truth, Heidegger claims that

“untruth is not plain falsity” (Heidegger, 1967, p.149). Since the negation contained in ‘*un-truth*’ is Heidegger’s notion of negation, ‘untruth’ both ‘accepts’ and ‘rejects’ truth. This means that an ‘un-true’ proposition is not true *only* because it is also false; *vice versa*, an ‘un-true’ proposition is not false *only* because it is also true. What is ‘un-true’ is both true and false. As Heidegger himself claims, “the primordial non-essence of truth, as un-truth, points to (...) the truth of being **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**” (Heidegger, 1967, p.149). Adopting the concept of *Aletheia*, the ontological difference is un-true. The proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is true (because this is the assumption Heidegger works with) and it is false (because, as we have seen, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity too). The proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is neither true *only* nor false *only*. It is both true and false. In Heidegger’s terminology, it is un-true.

## Chapter 3

# *Außersein*

**Overview.** In this chapter, we run a comparison between Alexius Meinong and Martin Heidegger. We show that the ontologies developed by these two philosophers have some important features in common. We compare Heidegger's account of intentionality and Meinong's account of intentionality. We also show that there are important similarities between Heidegger's account of entities and Meinong's account of objects. Finally, we draw a comparison between Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and Meinong's *Außersein*.

Before continuing, I would like to make a short clarification. The present chapter does not want to fully assimilate Meinong's view to Heidegger's view. It simply aims to show that, as does Heidegger, Meinong faces a denotational paradox in the case of defective objects. It also suggests that Meinong can adopt a dialetheic solution to the problem represented by defective objects, following the second Heidegger.

**Structure.** In **Section 2.1**, we discuss Meinong's account of intentionality (2.1.1) and Meinong's ontology (2.1.2 and 2.1.3). In **Section 2.2**, we introduce Heidegger's account of intentionality (2.2.1) and Heidegger's ontology (2.2.2 and 2.2.3). In **Section 2.3**, we propose a comparison between Meinong and Heidegger, discussing both their analogies and disanalogies. Finally, in **Section 2.4**, we argue that Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as an extreme case of Meinong's ontology.

## 3.1 Enter Meinong

### 3.1.1 Meinong's *Intentionalität*

According to Meinong, intentionality is that specific feature of cognition which distinguishes psychological events from non-psychological events.<sup>1</sup> Intentionality is that fundamental feature according to which any mental state is always directed towards an object and, as such, any mental state necessarily requires the object towards which it is directed. It also follows that whatever can be a target of a mental activity is indeed an object [*Gegenstand*]. As Meinong writes, this account of intentionality is so intuitive that “no one fails to recognize that psychological events so very commonly have this distinctive ‘character of being directed to something’ [*auf etwas Gerichtetsein*]” (Meinong, 1904, p.77). For instance, “knowing is impossible without something being known, (...) judgements and ideas or presentations are impossible without being judgements about and presentation of something” (Meinong, 1904, p.76). More complex psychological states, as in the case of emotions and desires, do not constitute an exception: “we are happy about something and, at least in the majority of cases, do not wish without wishing for something” (Meinong, 1904, p.77).

According to this intuition, Meinong's account of intentionality is grounded on two main components: a mental state directed towards an object and the object towards which the mental state is directed. Consider the following case: *X* thinks about *Y*. Such an intentional activity is composed of two elements: *X*'s mental state that is directed towards *Y* and an intentional object *Y* towards which the mental state is directed. Meinong focuses his attention on both of these components, proposing an account of psychological states and an account of intentional objects. Let's start with the first one.

Even though Meinong is clearly concerned with what is commonly called intentionality [*Intentionalität*], he never uses this term. Not only does Meinong endorse the idea that we can be intentionally directed towards the very same object by different kinds of mental activities but he also believes that we can have different kinds of intentional activities directed towards different kinds of objects. Indeed, as we can see from the next table, according to Meinong, there are two types of mental experience [*Erlebnis*]: the intellectual one and the emotional one. The intellectual experience is divided into repre-

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<sup>1</sup>It is common to find this idea in many other philosophers, such as Brentano, Husserl and Sartre. For more details, see Crane (1998) and chapter 6 of Voltolini (2009).

sentation [*Vorstellung*] and thought [*Gedanke*], while the emotional experience is divided into feeling [*Gefühl*] and desire [*Begehren*]. Each type of mental experience has a different kind of content. Concerning the intellectual experience, the content of a representation is called objectum [*Objekt*] and it is expressed by a noun or an adjective, while the content of a thought is called objective [*Objektiv*] and it concerns one or more representations. An objective can be expressed by an independent sentence (for instance, ‘red is a color’), by a ‘that’-clause (for instance, ‘that red is a color’) or by a nominal phrase (for instance, ‘the colorfulness of red’). Concerning the emotional experience, the content of a feeling is called dignitative [*Dignitativ*] (for instance, ‘the attractiveness of the color red’) and the content of a desire is called desiderative [*Desiderativ*] (for instance, ‘this fruit should be red’).<sup>2</sup>

Mental experience [ <i>Erlebnis</i> ]			
Intellectual		Emotional	
Representation	Thought	Feeling	Desire
[ <i>Vorstellung</i> ]	[ <i>Gedanke</i> ]	[ <i>Gefühl</i> ]	[ <i>Begehren</i> ]
Objectum	Objective	Dignitative	Desiderative
[ <i>Objekt</i> ]	[ <i>Objektiv</i> ]	[ <i>Dignitativ</i> ]	[ <i>Desiderativ</i> ]
«Red»	«Red is a colour»	«The attractiveness of the colour red»	«This fruit should be red»

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to point out that, according to Meinong, objecta and objectives necessarily involve each other. On the one hand, whenever we represent the objectum ‘red’, we think something about it (for instance, we think that ‘red is a color’ or ‘red is something’). In both cases, in order to represent the objectum ‘red’, we think about it using objectives. On the other hand, it is not possible to think about something without any representation at all. For instance, when we think

<sup>2</sup>Meinong’s ideas about intentionality are highly controversial and there are a lot of different interpretations available on the market. However, the basic features of Meinong’s intentionality presented in this chapter are commonly accepted as true. For a more detailed discussion about the topic, see Marek (2001) and Ryle (1973).

about the objective ‘red is a color’, we employ the representation of the objectum ‘color’ and the representation of objectum ‘red’. As Kalsi points out: “An objective (...) can only be in virtue of its *inferiora*, namely the objects [objecta] on which it is based” (Kalsi, 1980, p.122).<sup>3</sup> This means that it is possible to have objectives only because they are grounded on some basic components (namely Kalsi’s *inferiora*), which are objecta. This is also the reason why, even though objecta and objectives involve each other, it is necessary to carefully distinguish between them because, according to Meinong, an objective may be the subject matter of further objectives but an objective is always grounded on objecta. Consider the following statement: “‘red is a color’ is a beautiful objective’. In this case, the subject matter of the objective in question (namely “‘red is a color’ is a beautiful objective’) is another objective (namely ‘red is a color’); however, ultimately, these objectives are grounded in objecta (for instance, ‘red’, ‘color’, ‘objective’).

To conclude, not only there are different kinds of intentional acts but, for each of these acts, there are different kinds of objects as well. However, objecta, objectives, dignitatives and desideratives are all intentional objects. They are all *Gegenstände*.

### 3.1.2 Meinong’s *Gegenstand*

Given this account of intentionality, what is an intentional object (namely a *Gegenstand*)? What is the metaphysical structure of an intentional object *à la* Meinong? According to Meinong, whatever can be experienced in any way is an object. Some objects have being [*Sein*] and some objects do not. Moreover, since he admits two different ways or modes of being (namely existence and subsistence), he is an ontological pluralist. Following Kris McDaniel (2009), we take ontological pluralism to be the view according to which different objects can be (or exist) in different ways.<sup>4</sup> Meinong holds the following view: objects that are spatio-temporally located (for instance, the Empire State Building in New York) both exist and subsist, while objects that still have a certain mode of being

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<sup>3</sup>Someone may have the following question: what does ‘an objective can only be in virtue of its inferiora’ mean, when some objectives have no being at all? This kind of worry seems to suggest that, if an objective does not have being, then the objective in question cannot be in virtue of their *inferiora*. However, I believe that, according to Meinong, all objectives subsist (as numbers, statements and propositions), even though they are about objects that do not have being at all. See Meinong, 1917.

<sup>4</sup>Among neo-meinongians, the pluralistic element concerning being has almost vanished. For instance, both Priest (2005) and Routley (1980) think that existence has a monistic meaning, while Parsons simply remains neutral avoiding the issue (cf. 1980, p.10).

without being spatio-temporal located (for instance, a mathematical object such as a prime number) subsist only.<sup>5</sup> If an object exists, then it necessarily subsists but not all objects that subsist necessarily exist (cf. Marek, 2013).<sup>6</sup> Finally, an object without any kind of being (for instance, a fictional object such as Sherlock Holmes) neither exists nor subsists.

Since it is possible to direct psychological activities towards something with being in the mode of existence (for instance, the computer that I am using right now), then some intentional objects exist. Since it is possible to direct psychological activities towards something with being in the mode of subsistence (for instance, a Fourier transformation), then some intentional objects subsist. Finally, since it is possible to direct psychological activities towards something that does not have being at all (for instance, fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes or Father Christmas), then some intentional objects neither exist nor subsist. In this last case, Meinong claims that an object without any mode of being has non-being [*Nichtsein*]. As all objects with being, all objects with non-being (all non-beings, using Marek's terminology (cf. Marek, 2013, p.12), or non-entities, using Routley's terminology (cf. Routley, 1980, p.7)) are welcomed in Meinong's ontology.<sup>7</sup> Being is treated as a property (the property of *being existent* or the property

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<sup>5</sup>Among neo-meinongians, the situation is more complicated. For instance, in his *Nonexistent Objects* (1980), Parsons works with a naïve understanding of 'existence', using "the word 'exists' so that it encompasses exactly those objects that orthodox philosophers hold to exist" (Parsons, 1980, p.11). Zalta is very close to the definition given by Meinong himself claiming that *existing* is *being located in space* (cf. Zalta, 1988, p.21). Last but not least, Priest, in *Towards non-being* (2005), suggests the relation between existence and causal efficacy. However, in paragraph 7.2 of the same book, he also recognizes a relation between existence and *being concrete*. Finally, in *Not to be* (2009), Priest discusses a relation between existence and *being spatio-temporally located*.

<sup>6</sup>In private conversation, both Francesco Berto and Kris McDaniel claimed that Meinong supports a different view. They claimed that, according to Meinong, existence and subsistence are opposite. In other words, if something exists, it does not subsist; if something subsists, it does not exist. They are not wrong about this. However, we should not forget that this is correct for the very early production of Meinong (for instance, *On Assumptions*, 1902), while, in the present chapter, I am only concerned with his late production. This is why, appealing to *The Theory of Object* and *On Possibility and Probability*, I claim that, according to Meinong, everything that exists subsists, while not everything that subsists exists as well.

<sup>7</sup>The analogy between Meinong's intentional objects instantiating non-being and Routley's non-entities is proposed by Marek (2013). However, this analogy may be misleading because, as we have claimed in footnote number 3 of the present chapter, Routley does not endorse any distinction between existence and subsistence. This means that, according to Routley, there are non-entities (namely objects

of *being subsistent*) and this property is instantiated by some objects (existent or subsistent objects) and not by others (objects that neither exist nor subsistent). Non-being is treated as a property as well and it is instantiated by some objects (objects that neither exist nor subsist) and not by some other objects (namely existent or subsistent objects).

Among all these objects with and without being, there are all kinds of weird objects: not only are there my laptop and Father Christmas but, for instance, there are also *impossibilia*, which are objects with inconsistent properties such as the square triangle. As we have already explained, in Meinong's terms, all these objects are objects because they can be a target of a mental activity: we can imagine Sherlock Holmes, remember my computer and we can argue about a square triangle. Of course, Sherlock Holmes, my laptop and the square triangle are very different objects; still, they are objects. They are *Gegenstände*.<sup>8</sup>

Meinong's ontology can accommodate such a vast range of objects because it is grounded on two main principles. [1] First of all, he endorses the **Principle of Independence** which states that the existence or subsistence of an object is independent from all the other properties that this object has. In other words, any object has the properties that this object has regardless its ontological status. As Marek reports: "Such principle applies, not only to objects which do not exist in fact, but also to objects which could not exist because they are impossible. Not only is the much heralded gold mountain made of gold, but the round square is as surely round as it is square" (Marek, 2013, p.12). [2] Secondly, he endorses the Principle of Indifference (also called **Principle of *Außersein***) according to which "the pure object stands beyond being and non-being" (Marek, 2013, p.13). This means that both being (namely, having existence or subsistence) and non-being are not part of the object's nature – they do not represent what really constitutes the essence of an object. The ontological status of an object does not

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instantiating non-being) that, according to Meinong, subsist. For instance, according to Routley (2003), mathematical objects, such as numbers, are non-entities (namely entities that do not instantiate any mode of being); nonetheless, according to Meinong, mathematical objects are subsistent entities (which means that they instantiate a mode of being). The analogy seems to break down.

<sup>8</sup>It is difficult to establish if Meinong thought that inconsistent objects (such as *impossibilia*) require a switch from classical logic to paraconsistent logic. According to Routley (1980), it is possible to interpret Meinong both in a classical way or in a paraconsistent way. Among neo-meinongians, both Parsons (1980) and Zalta (1988) have developed a consistent version of Meinongianism, while Priest (2005) and Routley (1980) have developed a version of Meinongianism which is friendly towards genuinely inconsistent objects.

affect what an object is. As Findlay specifies (1963, p.49), from this principle, it does not follow that an object can neither instantiate being nor non-being because, according to the law of excluded middle which Meinong seems to subscribe, every object necessarily has either being or non-being.

From these two principles, it naturally follows a radical denial of the Quinean idea that there are no true statements about objects instantiating non-being. Since Meinong develops an ontology which is friendly towards objects instantiating non-being, he also wants to be able to state true things about them. Meinong aims to have an ontology where, even though Sherlock Holmes neither exists nor subsists, it is still true that Sherlock Holmes is a detective. Indeed, according to the characterization principle (*CP*), any object has the properties that it is characterized as having. For any characterization, an object which satisfies that characterization is in the domain of discourse. Not only is *CP* (or, at least, the so-called naïve form of it) regarded as a crucial principle for Meinong but, in its updated versions, *CP* is also the main commitment for all the contemporary developments of Meinongianism (cf. Parsons, 1980; Routley, 1980; Zalta, 1988; Priest, 2005). This is the reason why, since the naïve version of *CP* was vulnerable to many different objections, both Meinong and contemporary neo-meinongians have devoted much efforts to revise it.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, for the purpose of the present chapter, it is not necessary to discuss in details all the versions of *CP* recently developed by neo-meinongians. It is enough to say that, for all of them, *CP* ensures that even objects without being have (at least, in some sense) the properties that they are characterized as having. As I have claimed in ‘Nonexistent Objects as Truth-Makers: Against Crane’s Reductionism’ (2016), the fact that all objects (regardless their ontological status) have the properties that they are described as having is an essential feature of all different forms of (neo-)Meinongianism.

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<sup>9</sup>Some neo-meinongians (cf. Parsons (1980); Routley (1980)) claim that, distinguishing nuclear and extra-nuclear properties, *CP* must be applied to characterizations which contain only nuclear properties. Some other neo-meinongians (cf. Zalta 1988) claim that there are two different ways of having properties: encoding and exemplifying. According to them, a nonexistent object encodes all the property it is characterized as having but does not exemplify them. Finally, another group of neo-meinongians (cf. Priest 2005; Berto 2013, Chap.6.3) claims that an object has all the properties it is characterized as having not necessarily in the actual world but in some possible or impossible worlds. In my ‘The Future Perfect of *Exploring Meinong’s Jungle and Beyond*’ (forthcomingb), I show that Routley was developing a new *CP* similar to the one defended by Priest and Berto. Unfortunately, he died before having the possibility of publishing his ideas about it.

According to the **Principle of Independence**, the properties instantiated by an object are independent from its ontological status. The properties instantiated by an object compose the *Sosein* of the object itself.<sup>10</sup> An object has its *Sosein* and whatever has a *Sosein* is an object. If it possible to refer to  $X$ ,  $X$  is an object; if  $X$  is an object,  $X$  has properties; if  $X$  has properties,  $X$  has a *Sosein* collecting these properties. Moreover, since being is treated as a property, the *Sosein* of an object with being contains all the properties instantiated by that object. Among these properties, there is also being (namely either *being existent* or *being subsistent*). On the contrary, the *Sosein* of an object without being contains all the properties instantiated by that object. Among these properties, there is the property of non-being.

We can schematically explain this idea in the following way. As the table below shows, an object (represented by the first row from the top) has a *Sosein* (represented by the second row in the table). As we can see, in the *Sosein*, there are properties ( $[P_1]$  ...  $[P_n]$ ) instantiated by the object in question. Given Meinong, since all objects either instantiate being or non-being, in the *Sosein*, there is either *Sein*, in the mode of existence or subsistence, or *Nichtsein* (see the table below, between  $[P_1]$  and  $[P_4]$ ).

Object [ <i>Gegenstand</i> ]
$[P_1]$
$[P_2]$
<i>Sein</i> (Existence or Subsistence) or <i>Nichtsein</i>
$[P_4]$
$[P_n]$
Outside-Being [ <i>Außersein</i> ]

Consider my laptop: it is an existent object and, in its *Sosein*, it has all the properties that my laptop has (for instance, **[P1]** *being grey*, **[P2]** *being metallic*, **[P4]** *being old*).

<sup>10</sup>We are aware that the properties contained in the *Sosein* of an object change according to the *CP* in use. For instance, if we work with Parsons' version of *CP*, namely the *CP* applied to characterizations which contain only nuclear properties, the *Sosein* contains only nuclear properties too. Since we are discussing the most basic form of Meinongianism (called naïve Meinongianism), we take *Sosein* to collect all the properties that an object instantiates without any restriction or constrain.

Since my laptop is spatio-temporally located and, thus, it exists, it is also the case that its *Sosein* contains that specific mode of being, which is represented by the property of *being existent*. Moreover, since existence always implies subsistence, my laptop subsists too. Secondly, consider a prime number. In the *Sosein* of this object, there are some properties too. For instance, there are the properties of **[P1]** *being a number* and **[P2]** *being prime*. Moreover, since, following Meinong, mathematical objects subsist but do not exist, in the *Sosein* of a prime number, there is the property of *being subsistent* too. Finally, consider a trickier example, namely Sherlock Holmes. According to Doyle's stories, he is a detective, he is smart and he lives in Baker Street. In a Meinongian framework, Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein* contains all the properties that Sherlock Holmes has (for instance, **[P1]** *being a detective*, **[P2]** *being smart*, **[P4]** *being resident in Baker Street* and so on). This last example is unusual because, according to Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes exists. This means that, following naïve Meinong, in Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein*, there must be the property of *being existent*. However, this is clearly not the case because there is no such object as an existent Sherlock Holmes. This problem has been solved by neo-meinongians developing different kinds of *CP*.<sup>11</sup>

Even though different neo-meinongians endorse different versions of the characterization principle, the interpretation of Meinong's ontology presented above is widely accepted. Nevertheless, as we can see from the previous table (third line from the top), there is a further element in Meinong's ontology. Indeed, he thinks that all objects have outside-being [*Außersein*]. The interpretation of this last element is controversial.

### 3.1.3 Meinong's *Außersein*

Digging into the secondary literature, it is possible to find four different accounts of *Außersein*.

**[1]** The most common account is a deflationary one. People endorsing this stance focus

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<sup>11</sup>For instance, consider Parsons' *CP*, according to which, in the *Sosein* of an object, there are only nuclear properties. Since, according to Parsons himself, the property of *being existent* is not a nuclear property, such a property is not in Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein*. Another example is Priest's *CP*, according to which an object has the properties that it is characterized as having, but not necessarily in the actual world. This means that Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein* contains the property of *being existent*, but in a possible world. Both strategies are meant to solve the problem faced by naïve Meinong.

on the **Principle of *Außersein*** without discussing what *Außersein* is.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, it is natural to think that any ‘principle of *X*’ concerns *X* without being *X*. As the Newtonian law of gravity is not gravity but it is about gravity, the principle of *Außersein* is not *Außersein* but it is about *Außersein*. Even though, the two concepts look intuitively related, they are still different. Meinong himself is very careful in keeping the two ideas apart: on the one hand, he talks about a principle which is concerned with the *Außersein* of a ‘pure object’ [*Der Satz vom Außersein des reinen Gegenstandes*]; on the other hand, he talks about *Außersein* itself using this expression as a noun-phrase independently from the principle grounded in it. Moreover, given the Meinongian assumption that every time there is an intentional act, this act is directed towards an object, *Außersein* has to be an object too. Indeed, Meinong himself talks and thinks about it. Thus, if one is interested in understanding what this object called *Außersein* is, the deflationary account is not helpful.

[2] An alternative approach to outside-being [*Außersein*] is proposed by Grossman (1973).<sup>13</sup> According to him, *Außersein*, namely what is outside being, is being and non-being. He starts considering an object A, which has being. He thinks that, following Meinong, we are committed to say that there is a ‘pure object’ A and a certain objective A\* concerning object A. However, Grossman specifies that, even though the objective A\* consists in the union of A and A’s being, there is no such object as A with its own being: A is nothing more than A itself (without the addition of A’s being). After that, Grossman invites us to consider the very same object A but, this time, without being. This means that A has non-being. Once again, the objective which represents A with non-being (let’s call it -A\*) consists in the union of A and A’s non-being. Nevertheless, there is no such object as A and its own non-being because, as Grossman has claimed before, A is nothing more than A itself (without the addition of A’s non-being). In other words, to say that A has being is not to say that an object called being is a part of A. In the same way, to say that

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<sup>12</sup>As Rapaport (1984), Routley (1980) and Parsons (1980) pointed out, the Meinongian notion of *Außersein* has never been taken into great consideration. According to them, Meinong’s *Theory of object* is often used to criticize the Quinean intuition according to which everything exists. And this is the reason why, all neo-meinongians have uniquely focused their attention on the concept of *Sein* and *Nichtsein*.

<sup>13</sup>As Routley has pointed out in some unpublished notes (Sylvan, Box 23), Grossman’s interpretation of *Außersein* is unclear. I agree with Routley. What follows is the best we could do to make sense of it.

A has non-being is not to say that an object called non-being is part of A. According to Grossman, “[existence and subsistence] cannot be parts of objects” because, since they are literally outside being, “there are no such entities [namely objects] as existence and subsistence. They can [only] be parts of objectives” (Grossman, 1973, p.48). In the same way, non-being cannot be part of an object because there is no such object as non-being. Grossman is also clear that ‘being a part of’ means ‘being an ontological constituent of’ an object. For instance, *being red* is part of a red object because it constitutes the redness of the object in question.

To see why Grossman’s interpretation is implausible, let’s start by pointing out that the expression “there are no such entities [namely objects] as existence and subsistence” is highly ambiguous. To begin with, it can be interpreted as ‘existence and subsistence are not entities [namely objects]’. If this is the case, Grossman’s interpretation of *Außersein* is incompatible with Meinong’s account of intentionality according to which every time we refer to something, we refer to an object. Since we can refer to existence and subsistence (since, for instance, I can say that ‘existence is a property’ and that ‘subsistence is different from existence’), they have to be objects too. According to Meinong, this is enough to state that being (in both the modes of existence and subsistence) is an object. The same holds for non-being. At this point, either Meinong is so naïve as to violate his own premises or he actually thinks that everything we refer to is an object but that being (in the mode of existence and substance) and non-being are somehow exceptions. In the first case, if we believe in the principle of charity, namely the principle according to which is always better to have interpretations that maximize the rationality of what the interpreted author thinks or writes, then Grossman’s interpretation does not look charitable at all. In the second case, according to Grossman, Meinong seems to make an *ad hoc* move just to guarantee the fact that, since being and non-being are not objects themselves, they cannot be part of any object either. Not only is this move unjustified (Meinong and Grossman do not explicitly propose any argument in favor of it) but it is difficult to see why, according to Grossman, being (existence or subsistence) and non-being cannot be part of an object but they can be part of objectives. This interpretation does not look convincing.

Then, let’s try to examine a second possible reading which interprets the proposition “there are no such entities [namely objects] as being and subsistence” as ‘entities [namely objects] like being and subsistence do not have being’. Once again, the same would hold

for non-being. In Meinongian terms, this means that being and non-being neither exist nor subsist. In this sense, being and non-being are *Außersein* – they are literally outside being. Being and non-being do not have being. This second interpretation cannot be philosophically accurate because, even assuming that being cannot be part of an object in virtue of the fact that neither exists nor subsists, then, not only being (which is either *being existent* or *being subsistent*), but also all the other properties (such as *being red* or *being sweet*) should not be part of an object either. According to this view, the properties *being red* and *being sweet* can not be part of a red sweet object and, thus, given Grossman’s definition of ‘being part of’, they can not constitute the redness or the sweetness of this object. This second interpretation, as the previous one, contradicts another fundamental assumption of Meinong’s theory of objects according to which objects, regardless of their ontological status, have the properties that they are characterized as having.<sup>14</sup> In Meinongian terms, objects always have a *Sosein* collecting the properties that these objects are characterized as having. Once again, this interpretation does not seem correct.

[3] The third account of *Außersein* is proposed by Lambert in his *Meinong and the Principle of Independence* (1983). According to Lambert, *Außersein* refers to the domain of nonexistent objects which is “literally, the domain of objects outside of being” (1983, p.14). As he points out, such a domain is enormous and, among its denizens, it comprehends “possible objects such as Pegasus or the golden mountain and also impossible objects such as the round square” (1983, p.22). In this case, *Außersein* is understood as the set of all objects with *Sosein* that do not contain being: *Außersein* is taken to be the set of all objects that do not instantiate either the property of *being existent* or the property of *being subsistent*. Nevertheless, this interpretation also faces some prob-

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<sup>14</sup>According to Grossman, being and not-being are not constitutive part of an object (they are not in the *Sosein* of an object) because they neither exist nor subsist. However, since, according to Meinong, being and not-being are just normal properties, it is plausible to assume that, if being and not-being are not constitutive part of an object, then all the other properties are not constitutive part of an object either. This is against Meinong’s *Theory of Objects*, which claims that an object has the properties that it is characterized as having. In order to make this point clearer, consider the following example. It is true that ‘Sherlock Holmes is a detective’ because Sherlock Holmes instantiates the property of *being a detective*. This means that the property of *being a detective* is a constitutive part of Sherlock Holmes’ *Sosein*. Given what we have argued before about Grossman’s interpretation, this cannot be true because, from his account of *Außersein*, it follows that no properties can be constitutive part of the *Sosein* of an object.

lems. Since, according to Meinong, all objects have *Außersein* (cf. Meinong, 1904, p. 83-86; Meinong, 1917, p. 19; Marek, 2013) and even assuming that we can charitably interpret Meinong's idea as 'any object is a member of *Außersein*', Meinong immediately becomes a nihilist. If every object is a member of *Außersein* and *Außersein* is the set of all nonexistent objects, it follows that all objects are nonexistent objects. If we assume this interpretation of *Außersein*, we have to accept that there are no existent objects at all. This conclusion is evidently against Meinong's ontology according to which, even though some objects do not exist (even though, in the *Sosein* of some objects, there is non-being), some objects exist and some other subsist. In other words, in the *Sosein* of some other objects, there is being.

[4] The fourth account interprets *Außersein* as what makes an object an object. Recently, two philosophers have supported this idea in two similar ways: Jacquette and Priest.

Let's start with Jacquette. Following Lambert, in his *Alexius Meinong, the Shepherd of Non-Being* (2015), Jacquette thinks that *Außersein* is a set or a domain of objects. However, Jacquette disagrees with Lambert, on the idea that *Außersein* collects nonexistent objects because, according to his interpretation, Meinong's *Außersein* is not a notion concerned with ontological issues. "*Außersein* is not a special kind of *Sein* [and it is not a special kind of *Nichtsein* either]" because "[it] is not a subcategory of the ontology" (2015, p. 71). Jacquette reads *Außersein* as the set of all objects regardless of whether these objects have being or non-being. *Außersein* is simply "the name Meinong later gives to what he speaks (...) as the pure object [*reiner Gegenstand*] considered independently of its ontic status" (Jacquette, 2015, p. 71). According to Jacquette, all objects, only in virtue the fact they instantiate the property of *being an object*, belong to *Außersein* which is "an ontologically neutral referential domain that falls entirely outside the ontology of existent or subsistent entities, as existed intended objects or intended objects with being. (...) *Außersein* as 'extraontology'" (2015, p. 71).

This interpretation is consistent with Meinong's ontology. Since Meinong himself claims that all objects have *Außersein*, but only some objects have being, it is natural to think that there is a set collecting all objects, whatever their ontological status is. Jacquette calls this set '*Außersein*'. Nevertheless, someone may be suspicious towards Jacquette's interpretation because Meinong never talks about sets or domains. On the

contrary, he is clear that *Außersein* is something that all objects have, possess or, so to speak, instantiate (cf. Meinong 1904). In Meinong's words, "*Außersein* seems clearly predicable to all objects" (Meinong, 1917, p.19). An object does not have, possess or instantiate a set or a domain but, more correctly, it is a member of a set or it belongs to a domain. For this reason, it would be more natural to read *Außersein* as a property that all objects possess or instantiate. Such an interpretation is delivered by Priest in his *Sein Language* (2014c).

Priest interprets Meinong's idea that any object has *Außersein* as "any object is simply an object" (Priest, 2014c, p.439). Thus, *Außersein* is understood simply as the property of *being an object*. If something is an object, it instantiates the property of *being an object* – it has *Außersein*. Meinong himself seems to support this interpretation claiming that: "even what neither exists nor subsists (...) has still a remnant of a positional character, [that is] *Außersein*" (Meinong, 1983, p.12). Here, Meinong suggests that, regardless of the ontological status of an object, for any object, there is always something contributing to its 'positional character', namely something that makes any object an object 'present' to the consciousness of a subject. This something is *Außersein*.

Since, according to Meinong, *being present to a subject consciousness* means *being an (intentional) object*, *Außersein* is what makes an object an object – it is the *objecthood* of an object. Moreover, since everything that has properties is an object and having properties is having a *Sosein*, then if something has *Außersein* (if something is an object), it has properties too (it has a *Sosein*). Having *Außersein* is equivalent to having *Sosein*: since *Außersein* is a property, even an object which has only the property of *Außersein* would have a *Sosein* containing, at least, one property, that is the property of *being an object*. Priest also adds that "if something is an object it is self-identical (*Identitätsein*) and *vice versa*" (Priest, 2014c, p. 439). Thus, everything that is an object instantiates some properties (or, at least, the only property of *being an object*) and everything that instantiates at least a property has a *Sosein*. Moreover, everything that is an object instantiates the property of *being an object* (namely *Außersein*) and everything that instantiates the property of *being an object* is self-identical. Everything that is an object has *Außersein* and it is self-identical.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Someone can argue that Priest's account of *Außersein* treats *Außersein* as a third mode of being and this is explicitly denied by Meinong (for instance, see Grossman (1974)). However, this objection is wrong because, according to Priest, *Außersein* is not a mode of being but it is the necessary condition

Assuming Priest's account of *Außersein*, and going beyond what Meinong has explicitly claimed, some interesting remarks could follow. Indeed, *Außersein* is a metaphysically fundamental property, an *ur*-property. We take an *ur*-property to be a property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. Consider the property of *being red*. This is not an *ur*-property because its instantiation is not entailed by the instantiation of the property of *being a car*. Indeed, we can have cars that are not red. However, the property of *being an object* is an *ur*-property because the instantiation of any property entails its instantiation. In order, for something, to be red, green, tall or heavy, this something has to be a thing, namely an object, in the first place. Moreover, according to Meinong, it is enough for something to have a property in order to be an object. If something has a *Sosein* (if something has properties), it is an object. If something is an object, it trivially has *Außersein*, namely it trivially has the property of *being an object*. From this point of view, *Außersein* is that *ur*-property the instantiation of which is always and necessarily entailed by any other property. In the rest of the present chapter, we will assume Priest's interpretation of *Außersein*.

## 3.2 Enter Heidegger

### 3.2.1 Heidegger's *Intentionalität*

If Meinong clearly develops a philosophy of psychology and an ontological account of intentional objects, Heidegger does not have such a clear-cut distinction between these two aspects of his work. Nevertheless, as I argue in 'The Recent Engagement between Analytic Philosophy and Heidegger's Thought: Metaphysics and Mind' (forthcominga), he undoubtedly gives significant contributions to both fields of research. Let's begin with the first one.

Even though the expression 'intentionality' is largely absent in the Heideggerian corpus, Heidegger is deeply concerned with this topic as well. Indeed, in his *History of the concept of time*, he claims that 'intentionality' is one of the "decisive discoveries of phenomenology" that he has assumed in developing his own metaphysics (Heidegger, 1989b, p.3). Since both Meinong and Heidegger started their research from Brentano, their

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to have any mode of being. In order to be an existent or a subsistent object, it is necessary to be an object.

accounts of intentionality share two main features.<sup>16</sup> [1] First of all, as with Meinong, Heidegger thinks that an intentional activity is always directed towards something. This is why Heidegger claims that “[intentional] comportments have the structure of *directing-oneself-towards*, of *being-directed-towards* [something]” (Heidegger, 1975, p. 57). [2] Secondly, Heidegger shares with Meinong the idea that intentionality is a “comportment” which is always “directed towards this whereto: in formal terms, it is related or referred to an entity” (Heidegger, 1975, p. 62). Then, an intentional activity requires two *relata*: a subject’s comportment directed towards an object and the object towards which the subject’s comportment is directed. Heidegger calls this second *relatum* ‘entity’ [*Gegenstand*].<sup>17</sup> As we have explained in chapter 1, according to Heidegger, an entity is “what[ever] is put in front of the perception, the imagination, the judgement, the desire and the intuition” (Heidegger, 1967, p.28). Consistently with Meinong, Heidegger thinks that every time we refer to something with an intentional activity (for example, with our thoughts, imagination or emotional states), this something is an (intentional) object or, in Heidegger’s terms, it is an entity. Even more explicitly, in his *Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, Heidegger claims that “a thought is always a thought about something” because “each thought is related to a specific entity which is in front of us” (Heidegger, 1978, p.13).<sup>18</sup>

Even though there are many similarities between Meinong’s and Heidegger’s account of intentionality, there is also a significant difference. On the contrary of Meinong, Heidegger believes that intentional activities are not always concerned with only one single entity. *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the human being, has the unique feature of *being-in-the-world* [*Sein-in-der-Welt*] and the world is the totality of all entities. In other terms, the

<sup>16</sup>For a complete overview of the relation between Heidegger and Brentano, see the first section, second chapter of Volpi (2010).

<sup>17</sup>As we have already claimed in the first footnote of the first chapter, Heidegger uses a lot of different terms to refer to intentional objects (for instance, ‘entity’, ‘object’ and ‘thing’). All these terms have a phenomenological different meaning. However, in the present work, we treat all these terms as synonyms.

<sup>18</sup>I am aware that many Heideggerians are not sympathetic with the idea that intentionality is a relation between a ‘mental state’ and an entity. However, I believe that, even assuming that Heidegger disagrees on the fact that intentionality is a relation between a mental state and an entity, he himself undoubtedly agrees on the fact that ‘comportments’ require something which the comportments are about (for instance, a hammer, a work of art, or even the world). As such, the paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is still there. Another way of rephrasing such a paradox is the following: even though it should be impossible to have a comportment towards **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an thing), we still have a comportment towards **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

world contains everything that is. When human beings are directed towards an entity through an intentional activity, they relate to this entity placing it in a network of other entities.<sup>19</sup> For *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>, an entity is always in relation with other entities. In Heidegger's words: "For our [intentional] comportments towards entities, we never think a single entity, and whenever we size up expressively for itself we are taking it out of a contexture to which it belongs in the real content" (Heidegger, 1975, p. 31).

Thus, as with Meinong, Heidegger thinks that intentionality is still a relation in which one of the two *relata* is an entity. Nevertheless, since the subject of these mental comportments (namely Heidegger's *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>) has the very specific feature of dwelling in the world as a network of entities, sometimes the human being does not direct his intentional activity towards one entity only, but, metaphorically speaking, the human being inhabits the relation between the entities themselves. Heidegger thinks that an accurate phenomenology of *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>'s intentional activities can show this fact: in some specific circumstances, the human beings do not only deal with entities as they are decontextualized entities, but they also dwell in the relation between them and other entities too – they are *in-the-world* [*In-der-Welt-sein*]. It is important to point out that, from the Heideggerian definition of intentionality, it does not follow that an intentional activity does not require an entity towards which the activity is directed. It simply means that an intentional activity is not necessarily a binary relation between a mental state and an entity, but it can also be a relation between a mental state and some (or even all) entities in the world. In order to have a better understanding of Heidegger's account of intentionality, let's examine the following table.

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<sup>19</sup>This idea is clear in an example proposed by Dreyfus (1990). Consider musicians. When musicians play a symphony, they do not only intentionally relate to their instruments but to the beauty of the symphony, their feelings, the other musicians and so on and so forth. In this sense, according to Heidegger, intentionality is a complex phenomena that does not simply concern a relation with an (intentional) object only.

Modes of Encounter		
Practical		Intellectual
Ready-to-hand	Unready-to-hand	Present-at-hand
Equipment	Equipment / Thing	Thing
« <i>Hammer</i> »	« <i>Broken Hammer</i> »	« <i>The hammer as an object of study</i> »

As in the case of Meinong, Heidegger divides intentional activities (namely *Dasein*\*'s modes of encountering entities) into two main categories: practical and intellectual activities. To begin with, he thinks that, in our everyday life, practical activities are represented by the encounter with a specific kind of entity called a piece of equipment. In this case, the intentional activity towards such kind of entity is a “telic one” (Heidegger, 1927, p.42). As “we do not perceive in order to perceive but in order to (...) pave the way in dealing with something” (Heidegger, 1927, p.42), in the same way, when we encounter a piece of equipment, we always encounter it for specific tasks. According to Heidegger, we do not achieve our most primordial relation with a piece of equipment either by thinking about it or with some detached theoretical research, but rather by skilfully using it. Only in this way, is a piece of equipment *ready-to-hand*, namely as it is ready to be used by the *Dasein*\*. Consider a hammer. According to Heidegger, “the less we just stare at the hammer-*thing*, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our [intentional] relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is – as a piece of equipment” (Heidegger, 1927, p. 42). Moreover, as many interpreters have already pointed out (cf. Dreyfus, 1990; Wheeler, 2011), while engaged in trouble-free hammering, the really skilled carpenter does not (intentionally) engage with the hammer only. From this point of view, the skilled carpenter dwells in the world. *Dasein*\*'s capacity of using equipments in this skillful way (what Heidegger calls ‘circum-spection’) is not only grounded on the relation between that subject (the carpenter) and that entity (the hammer). Even though skilled carpenters have probably thought about the hammer, the relation between a skilled subject using the hammer and the hammer itself is more complicated than the simple relation between someone thinking about the hammer and the hammer. Indeed, skilled carpenters are aware of the deep meaning of

the hammer because they dwell in the network of all entities in which the hammer is placed, namely the hammer itself *and* the nail *and* the work-bench *and* the beauty of what the carpenter is building *and* ...

The second kind of intentional activity is the intellectual one. When *Dasein*\* engages in scientific practices, when his or her mental states are devoted purely to reflective or philosophical contemplation, the object of study is abstract from the world, from the network of entities. It is isolated and treated as a simple entity of study. For this reason, following Heidegger, the entity (which is now called ‘thing’ [*Ding*]) is not *ready-to-hand* but it is *present-at-hand*. Consider an engineer designing a hammer. In this case, *Dasein*\* intentionally relates with the hammer as something that needs to be studied and theoretically understood. *Dasein*\* does not need to place the hammer in the network of other entities in order to use it properly because *Dasein*\* is not interested in using the hammer at all. In order to project a hammer is not necessary to be a skillful carpenter: it is not relevant to dwell in the relation between the hammer *and* the nail *and* the work-bench *and* the beauty of what the carpenter is building *and* .... An abstract understanding, which isolates the entity from the world, is enough. In this case, the hammer is *present-at-hand*.

Finally, according to Heidegger, among the practical intentional activities, there is also another phenomenological category which represents the intentional activity directed towards something that is indeed a piece of equipment but it is a broken one. *Dasein*\*, realizing that a piece of equipment malfunctions, is still aware that such a piece of equipment is not a mere thing, namely it is not simply *present-at-hand*. It has the potential of being *ready-to-hand*. Nonetheless, because such a piece of equipment is broken, it is not fully *ready-to-hand* either: it cannot be used. As Heidegger writes: “the *presence-at-hand* of something that cannot be used is still not devoid of all *readiness-to-hand* whatsoever; a piece of equipment which is *present-at-hand* is still not just a thing which occurs somewhere” (Heidegger, 1927, p.35). In this case, Heidegger thinks that a broken piece of equipment is *unready-to-hand*. Consider a broken hammer. Since it is a hammer, it is a piece of equipment; however, it cannot function as a piece of equipment because it is broken. Thus, when *Dasein*\* intentionally relates to a broken hammer, *Dasein*\* understands that the broken hammer is a piece of equipment without being able to be used as such.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>I am aware that there are other possible interpretations of Heidegger’s intentionality on the market.

In conclusion, it is important to specify that, beside the distinctions between different kinds of entities and different kinds of intentional activities, Heidegger thinks that, given any intentional act, there is always an entity corresponding to it. Nevertheless, the question of the ontological nature of these entities remains open. Concerning this worry and starting with *Being and time* (1927), Heidegger develops an ontology, which shows other significant similarities with Meinong's metaphysics. Let's discuss them.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2.2 Heidegger's *Gegenstand*

Heidegger's ontology has three main features in common with Meinong's theory of objects. [1] First of all, as we have previously introduced, according to both of them, an object or an entity is everything we can refer to. In Heideggerian terms: "an entity is what is represented" (Heidegger, 1967, p.29). [2] Secondly, even though Heidegger does not introduce any distinction between existence and subsistence, he endorses another version of ontological pluralism according to which there are different modes of existence. For instance, on the one hand, some entities have *Existenz*\*. According to Heidegger (1927), *Existenz*\* is a term that is rooted in the existentialist tradition and it refers to a unique metaphysical attitude proper of *Dasein*\* only. Indeed, the human being is the only kind of entity that can dwell in the world in the way previously described. As we have discussed in the first chapter, the human being is also the only kind of entity that can ask the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). On the other hand, some other entities exist in another way: they have *Wirklichkeit*\* which refers to the Latin *existentia*, namely the property of *being material* or the property of *being real*. According to Heidegger, a table has *Wirklichkeit*\* (in the sense that a table instantiates the property of *being material* or

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For instance, see McDaniel forthcoming. However, in this chapter, we just take into consideration the most common one.

<sup>21</sup>It is difficult to find a quotation according to which any intentional state requires an intentional object (or an entity). However, in his *Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, Heidegger claims that: "a thought is always a thought about something" because "each thought is related to a specific entity which is in front of us" (Heidegger, 1978, p.13). Moreover, many quotations used in chapter 2 seem to suggest the idea that, when we engage in intentional activities (or comportments), we engage with entities as well. Heidegger's definition of entity is also deeply connected with intentionality. For instance, in his course on Kant, Heidegger claims that an entity is whatever we can think about (see footnote number 9, previous chapter). Finally it is important to specify that the fact that any intentional act requires an intentional object is hermeneutically powerful, because it seems the only way to explain why Heidegger thinks that talking and thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is actually paradoxical.

the property of *being real*) while human beings, even though they are material and real as tables, have *Existenz\** (in the sense that they instantiate the property of *being existent* because they can inhabit the world asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). [3] The third and last feature in common between Meinong's ontology and Heidegger's ontology is the following one: on the one hand, Meinong thinks that all objects are objects because they instantiate the property of *being an object* – such a property is called *Außersein*. On the other hand, as we have extensively discussed in chapter 1, Heidegger believes that all entities are entities simply because they *are* (because they are objects). What makes objects objects is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Then, as we can see from the following table, the ontological structure of Heidegger's entity (represented by the first row from the top) is similar to the Meinongian one. Indeed, according to Heidegger, an entity has some features (these features are represented in second row of the table below by **[P1]**, **[P2]** ... **[Pn]**) and these features determine its mode of being. For instance, in some cases, an entity can be *ready-at-hand* and, in some other cases, it can be *present-to-hand*. In some cases, an entity can enjoy *Existenz\** (namely the property of *being existent*) and, in some other cases, *Wirklichkeit\** (namely the property of *being material* or *being real*). Finally, all entities, exactly in virtue of their *being entities*, have **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Object [ <i>Gegenstand</i> ]
[P <sub>1</sub> ]
[P <sub>2</sub> ]
Existenz or Wirklichkeit or ...
[P <sub>4</sub> ]
[P <sub>n</sub> ]
Being [ <i>Sein</i> ]

Consider the following examples. Once again, take a hammer, which has some specific features: for instance, it has the feature of **[P1]** *being made out of wood*, **[P2]** *being metallic* and it also has the feature of **[P3]** *being a piece of equipment*. Due to **[P3]**, the hammer is a tool (something that is ready to be used by *Dasein\**) and, for this

reason, according to the intentional account previously described, a skilled carpenter can master it. In this case, the hammer is *ready-at-hand*. Moreover, since it is real, it is an existent object too: it enjoys *Wirklichkeit\** (namely the feature of *being material* or *being real*). Now, suppose that the hammer in question is broken. This hammer has exactly all the features that it had before, but it has also the feature of *being broken*. Since the carpenter cannot use it, it cannot be *ready-at-hand*. Indeed, it is *unready-at-hand*. This means that the feature that an object has (namely its properties) determine its mode of being. Finally, consider a geometrical figure. Take a triangle. According to Heidegger, a triangle has some features: for instance, it has the feature of **[P1]** *having three sides* and it has the feature of **[P2]** *having three angles*. Given these features, the triangle cannot be used as a piece of equipment: it is simply an object of study, of theoretical contemplation. Consistently with Heidegger's account of intentionality, the triangle is not *ready-at-hand* but it is *present-to-hand*. It is not meant to be used, to be manipulated but it is meant to be studied. It is important to specify that, since a hammer, a broken hammer and triangle are entities, they are entities because of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Even though many scholars have different interpretations of Heidegger's account of intentionality and Heidegger's ontology, the overview presented here is widely accepted. Nevertheless, as in the case of Meinong's *Außersein*, what is more controversial is the understanding of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) which, according to Heidegger himself, is the main and more radical component of an entity.

### 3.2.3 Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**)

There are three main accounts of Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. All these three accounts are concerned only with the so-called first Heidegger.

**[1]** The first account, which is also the most famous one, interprets Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the 'meaning' [*Sinn\**] of entities. Following Dreyfus's (1990) and Crowell's interpretation (2001), the difference between entities and the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities is the difference between entities and their meaning. This is also the reason why Heidegger's metaphysics is often interpreted as "an inquiry into meaning [*Sinn\**], into the condition for the appearance of entities [*Seiendes*]" (Crowell, 2001, pp.119-120).<sup>22</sup> In particular,

<sup>22</sup>The position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the *meaning* of entities is clearly stated by Dreyfus. However, he often uses the expression 'intelligibility' instead of the expression 'meaning'. Dreyfus:

following John Haugeland’s interpretation, *Dasein*\* understands the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities, namely the meaning of entities, if and only if *Dasein*\* is able to “project entities onto their possibilities” (Haugeland, 2013, p. 196). Haugeland makes the connection between entities and their **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely their meaning, by claiming that “disclosing the being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities involves grasping them in terms of distinction between what is possible and impossible for them” (Haugeland, 2013, p.196). Expressing the same idea in a slightly different way, Haugeland claim that “the being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities is effectively determined by relevant modal constrains” (Haugeland 2013, p. 185). For instance, chess pieces are understood in terms of the moves that are possible for them and the moves that are not possible for them. In other terms, to be a rook is to be able to move in straight lines and not to be able to move diagonally. Turning our attention to a more famous Heideggerian example, Haugeland’s interpretation seems to work for a piece of equipment as well. On the one hand, to be a hammer is to be something with which it is possible to pound a nail into wood. On the other hand, to be a hammer is also to be something with which is impossible to break an atom. From this point of view, *Dasein*\* understands the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities if and only if *Dasein*\* is ‘ontically responsible’ (cf. Haugeland, 2013). “Getting entities right requires a responsiveness to ostensible impossibilities in the current situation” and, further more, “the response must be a refusal to accept any current apparent impossibility” (Haugeland, 2013, p.201).

Haugeland gives three examples of impossibilities. **[A]** If we understand what electric current is (namely if we understand the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of the electric current), it is impossible to believe that something is carrying electric current but, at the same time, it does not generate a magnetic field; **[B]** if we understand what a hammer is (namely if we understand the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a hammer), it is impossible to think that something is a hammer but it breaks when strikes a nail. Finally, **[C]** if we understand what a child is (namely if we understand the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a child), it is impossible to believe that a child is, at the same time, at school and at home. In the first case, Haugeland deals with physical impossibility while, in the second case, he proposes an example of a (sort of) *ready-to-hand* impossibility (namely, an impossibility concerning the mode of being of a piece of equipment). The last example is about logical impossibility: it is

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**Being<sub>MET</sub>** “is that on the basis of which beings are already understood. Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is not a substance, process, an event, or anything that we normally come across; rather, it is a fundamental aspect of entities, viz. their intelligibility. (...) *Sinn* is usually translated as ‘meaning’ but that makes phrases like ‘the meaning of being’ sound too definitional. We use sense” (Dreyfus, 1990, p.xi-xii).

logically impossible for an entity to have, at the same time, inconsistent properties (for instance, *being at school* and *not being at school*). In all these cases, facing some kind of impossibility, *Dasein*\* finds something wrong with the entities that she encounters. Such a recognition should generate, at least in a ‘ontical responsible’ person, a refusal to accept that something impossible is happening. According to Haugeland, this is exactly the process, which determines the right meaning of entities.

This understanding of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** faces two main problems. The first worry represents a minor issue, which is relevant only for Haugeland’s interpretation. As we have already seen, his modal conception of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and his conception of responsibility are heavily grounded on the idea of impossibility and the refusal to accept it. As example [C] shows, among the many different accounts, Haugeland’s conception of impossibility seems to rely on the principle of non-contradiction as well. However, this specific interpretation cannot be correct for the whole trajectory of Heidegger’s philosophy: indeed, as we have argued in chapter 1, the later Heidegger rejects the idea that the principle of non-contradiction is an absolutely fundamental law for both logic and reality.<sup>23</sup> The second worry is a more substantial one and it is about the identity between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** [*Sein*] and meaning [*Sinn*\*], which does not seem to hold for the Heidegger before the *Kehre*\*. In paragraph number 34 of *Being and time* (1927), he defines ‘meaning’ as that in terms of which something can be understood. In this context, ‘understanding’ should not be primarily read as an epistemic activity but, following Haugeland, as an ability to discover the possibility of entities in terms of their modes of being. However, when Heidegger claims that the aim of his metaphysical enterprise is to grasp “the meaning [*Sinn*\*] of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1927, p.1), he does not mean that his aim is to grasp the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, according to Heidegger himself, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot have **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.<sup>24</sup> More-

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<sup>23</sup>Someone may object that my critique is incorrect because Haugeland is only concerned with the first Heidegger (namely the Heidegger before the *Kehre*\*) and the first Heidegger seems to accept the principle of non-contradiction. This may be correct for the first part of Haugeland’s production but it is certainly incorrect for his late work. Indeed, as Haugeland himself claims in his *Dasein disclosed* (2013), his aim is to extend his modal interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to the late Heidegger as well. However, it is also true that, as we have specified in footnote 18 of chapter 1, the late Heidegger seems to accept only the contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Therefore, Haugeland may reply that his account of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** holds for all entities, but **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

<sup>24</sup>The situation may be different for the Heidegger after the *Kehre*\*. Assuming the interpretation proposed in the chapter 1, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and not **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) is an entity and not. It follows that,

over, Heidegger suggests that the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (namely what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is) is generated by “the wonder that a world is *worlding* around us at all, that there are entities rather than nothing, that entities are and even ourselves are (...)” (Heidegger, 1927, p.123). According to Heidegger, the problem is not the meaning of the world or the meaning of the entities around us but it is the brutal fact that the world and the entities around us actually *are*. And this is also what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are both concerned with: regardless the meaning of entities, entities are. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is exactly concerned with the ontological status of entities that *are* – it is concerned with the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities.

[2] The second account is presented by Kris McDaniel. According to McDaniel, the Heideggerian **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an analogical term because “it has a generic sense which, roughly, applies to objects of different sorts in virtue of those objects exemplifying very different features” (McDaniel, 2009, p.295). An example of this kind of term is the property of *being healthy*. Many things can be appropriately considered healthy: the relationship with my girlfriend is healthy, jogging is healthy and my liver is healthy. However, all those things are healthy in different ways. A relationship is healthy when the two partners are happy, jogging is healthy because it brings benefits to the body and my liver is healthy when it is properly functioning. From this point of view, *being healthy* can be understood as the disjunction of *being able to bring happiness*, *being able to bring health* and *being able to properly function*. Nevertheless, even though these examples show that, paraphrasing Aristotle, *being healthy* is said in many ways, it seems that, among all those meanings, there is also a unifying one. All these different ways of understanding the property of *being healthy* seem to have a grounding meaning in common (cf. McDaniel, 2009, p.294).<sup>25</sup>

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since all entities have **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself has **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and not. In this sense, accepting the identity between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and meaning, it is possible to claim that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has a meaning. Nevertheless, this is not what the majority of authors supporting the identity between *Sein* and *Sinn* deals with, since they are always primarily concerned with the first Heidegger.

<sup>25</sup>According to McDaniel, another analogical term is *being part of* (cf. McDaniel, 2009, p.295-296). Against Lewis and the idea that *being part of* is always univocal, McDaniel defends compositional pluralism. He believes that there is more than one fundamental relation of part to whole. For instance, “the fundamental parthood relation that your hand bears to your body is not the fundamental parthood relation that this region of space-time bears to the whole of space-time” (McDaniel, 2009, p. 296). McDaniel discussed and defended compositional pluralism in his ‘Modal Realism with Overlap’ (2004)

McDaniel grounds the idea that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an analogical term on the evidence that Heidegger develops an extremely detailed phenomenology of entities, which includes the possibility of different modes of being. For instance, as we have seen, “Heidegger reserves the term *Existenz*<sup>\*</sup> for the kind of being had by entities like you and me [namely human beings]” (McDaniel, 2009, p.296) while other ways of being include *readiness-to-hand*, *unreadiness-to-hand* and *presence-at-hand* (cf. McDaniel, 2009, p.296-297). According to these examples, McDaniel seems to be right in claiming that Heidegger gives different phenomenological accounts of different kinds of entities. As Heidegger himself states, “there is a multiplicity of *modi existendi*” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151).

However, given the interpretation defended in chapter 1, someone may move two objections. [A] First of all, the examples discussed above do not necessarily show that there are different kinds of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words, from the fact that different entities are given to us in phenomenological different ways, it does not necessarily follow that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is given in different ways. If the interpretation of McDaniel is correct, the meaning of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in Heidegger’s metaphysics has to be understood as a disjunction whose disjuncts include *Existenz*<sup>\*</sup>, *ready-to-hand*, *present-at-hand*, *unready-to-hand* and all the other possible modes of being. Nevertheless, those examples simply show that entities with “a specific content” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151) and “a defined quiddity” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151) can be phenomenologically given to us in different ways. From this point of view, it may be the case that entities are different not because they enjoy different kinds of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but because they have specific features which make them phenomenologically distinguishable. Consider a hammer. Using Heidegger’s jargon, someone may say that it is only because some specific entities are pieces of equipment that they can hold different and distinct modes of being (a piece of equipment). Nevertheless, it is not **Being<sub>MET</sub>** that has a different meaning but it is the entity (in this case, the hammer) that has different features. What makes a hammer a different entity than a mathematical theorem is not the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of the hammer but the feature of ‘hammering’ which is exclusively proper to the hammer. Heidegger: “The hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ of the hammer. The kind of entity which a piece of equipment possesses – in which it manifests itself in its own right – we call ‘*readiness-to-hand*’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.98). The hammering itself delivers the phenomenological features that characterize the hammer – not a different **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Even though the

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and ‘Compositional Pluralism and Composition as Identity’ (2014).

**Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a hammer is exactly the same **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a mathematical theory, the former is different from the latter because of the hammer's features (what Heidegger calls 'the hammering itself'). The lack of this specific feature makes a mathematical theorem not *ready-to-hand* and not particularly helpful in driving a nail either.

[B] The second issue is the following one: according to the ontological difference endorsed by Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. "The being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities is not an entity" (Heidegger, 1927, p.6). At this point, someone may say that, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, these different ways of being cannot be modes of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself. Given the interpretation defended in chapter 1, if **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has different modes, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is something, namely that entity which has different modes.<sup>26</sup> However, according to Heidegger himself, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be that entity which has different modes of being either.<sup>27</sup>

[3] Finally, let's discuss the third interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. This last interpreta-

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<sup>26</sup>Let me develop this thought in more details. According to my interpretation, Heidegger thinks that everything we can think about is an entity. Heidegger also thinks that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. If we support the view according to which Heidegger thinks that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be given in different ways, then we turn **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into that thing (aka entity) which is thought as *something* given in different ways. This is not possible because, according to Heidegger, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be that entity which is given in different ways either. This may lead us to think that, according to Heidegger, entities (and not **Being<sub>MET</sub>**!) are given in different ways. According to my interpretation, this argument works only for the first Heidegger, namely for the period in which he does not endorse any form of dialetheism about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. The situation is different when Heidegger endorses the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not. In this second case, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** both can and cannot be given in different ways. It cannot be given in different ways because only entities can be given in different ways and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. It can be given in different ways because it is an entity as well.

<sup>27</sup>McDaniel could reply that these objections (especially objection [B]) presuppose a strong account of intentionality which, according to McDaniel himself, Heidegger does not buy. McDaniel would be right in thinking so. However, the remarks presented here do not want to show that McDaniel's interpretation faces some issues: it only wants to show that, given what we have said in chapter 1, it is difficult to merge his interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as an analogical term with our interpretation of the second Heidegger. It may be also interesting to notice that the so-called second Heidegger is unsure about the analogical nature of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and he openly asks: "does being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] have such a vast range of meanings in virtue of its content transmitted to the single sentences and to the single [semantic] sphere it refers to? (...) Does being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] hide in itself all those meanings?" (Heidegger, 1966, p.100). Heidegger does not clearly answer. Finally, the analogical nature of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, which is clearly present in *Being and Time*, disappears in *Contribution to Philosophy* (1989a).

tion, which we take to be the correct one, was recently supported by Priest (2014a; 2014c; 2015). As we have already claimed, according to Heidegger, the meaning of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** “is only circumscribed by the presence, the appearance [*Anwesenheit\**]” of an entity (Heidegger, 1966, p.101). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not concerned with any specific property, attribute or feature of an entity but it simply concerns the “objecthood of an object or the *quidditas* of a *quid*” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151). “Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is what makes an entity an entity” (Heidegger, 1927, p.82). As for Meinong’s *Außersein*, Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the property of *being an object* of an object. To be an object, an entity, precisely is to instantiate *Außersein* and **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Moreover, as with Meinong’s *Außersein*, Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an *ur*-property (or, being more faithful to the Heideggerian jargon, an *ur*-feature). As discussed above, we take an *ur*-property to be a property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. According to Heidegger himself, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is entailed by any other property (or feature) because, in order to be an entity with some features (for instance, being *ready-to-hand*, *unready-to-hand* or *present-at-hand*), an entity needs to be an entity. As such, it needs to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Thus, according to Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is prior to any other property or feature, including the modes of being of each entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the *conditio sine qua non* of having other features besides the fact of simply *being an object*. As claimed in chapter 1, we assume this last interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

### 3.3 A summary of the comparison

Describing Meinong’s and Heidegger’s accounts of both intentionality and intentional objects, it seems evident that these two philosophers have a lot in common. However, before proceeding to discuss the major difference between them, let’s summarize the analogies.

First of all, we have shown that, according to Meinong and Heidegger, intentionality is always a relation which occurs between a subject’s mental state directed towards an object and the object towards which the subject’s mental state is directed. As we have seen, an intentional activity always has the feature of *being directed toward* something and, consequently, given an intentional activity, there is always an object or an entity towards which such an intentional activity is directed. Secondly, both Meinong and Heidegger think that there are different kinds of intentionality and that, for each kind of intentional

activity, there is a specific kind of intentional object or entity. Indeed, both Meinong and Heidegger think that there are two kinds of intentional activities. They agree that the first kind is an intellectual one (namely, a rational, philosophical, scientific and reflexive activity) but they disagree on the nature of the second activity. For Meinong, what is not an intellectual activity, it is an emotional one while, for Heidegger, it is simply practical. Moreover, for each one of these two categories, they also introduce different subcategories and, for each of these subcategories, there is a corresponding intentional object. For instance, Meinong thinks that the proper intentional object corresponding to a representation is an objectum but not an objective which is only the proper object of a thought. In the same way, Heidegger thinks that the entity corresponding to an intellectual activity is a thing but not a piece of equipment which is only proper of a practical activity.

Given similar accounts of intentionality, it is likely that there are similar accounts of intentional objects too. Nevertheless, in comparing Meinong's and Heidegger's positions, it is necessary to be careful because some terms can be misleading. On the one hand, Meinong thinks that any object has some properties and that the collection of these properties is called *Sosein*. On the other hand, Heidegger thinks that an entity has some specific features as well but, consistently with his account of intentionality, he also thinks that these features determine the 'modes of being' of the entity itself. For instance, if an entity  $X$  has the feature of *being a piece of equipment*, the mode of being of this entity (namely, the way in which *Dasein*\* phenomenologically encounters it) is *ready-to-hand*. On the contrary, if the same object  $X$  has the feature of *being a thing*, the mode of being of this entity is *present-at-hand*. Moreover, for both Meinong and Heidegger, there are different ways of existing. Nevertheless, they disagree about how objects or entities can exist in different ways. As we have already seen, the former believes that an object can exist (namely, it occupies a spatio-temporal region of the world) or simply subsist, while the latter draws a distinction between different kinds of existence grounded, not only on ontological, but also existential remarks. Indeed, only *Dasein*\* can enjoy *Existenz*\* (only *Dasein*\* can instantiate the property of *being existent* because only *Dasein*\* can ask the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) while everything else that is material or real, such as a table or a chair, simply has *Wirklichkeit*\* (it simply instantiates the property of *being material* or *being real*). Finally, they both think that there is something in virtue of which an object is an object. In Meinong's terminology, the property of *being an object*

is called *Außersein* while, in Heidegger's terminology, it is called **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Since it is important to remove any ambiguity, it is necessary to specify that what Meinong calls *Sein* (namely, existence and subsistence) corresponds to what Heidegger calls either *Existenz\** or *Wirklichkeit\** while what Heidegger calls **Being<sub>MET</sub>** corresponds to what Meinong calls *Außersein*.

### 3.4 Heidegger as a special case of Meinong's ontology

As we have already discussed in 1.1 and 1.3, Meinong thinks that everything has *Außersein* and that, taking *Außersein* to be the property of *being an object*, everything is an object. This means that, not only are my computer, Sherlock Holmes and the square triangle objects, but also that *Außersein* is an object as well. Indeed, *Außersein* is that intentional object to which we refer when we refer to the property of *being an object*. It is that object characterized as the *objecthood* of an object. Only at this point, we face a deep disagreement between Meinong and Heidegger. Indeed, while the former thinks that everything is an object, the latter believes that everything is an entity but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not. As we have seen, only after the *Kehre\**, Heidegger claims that there is something, namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, that is an object and not. If Meinong thinks that *Außersein* (namely, the *objecthood* of an object) is an object itself (namely, that object characterized as the *objecthood* of an object), Heidegger (before the *Kehre\**) believes that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (which is the analogous to Meinong's *Außersein*) is not an entity at all. The difference between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and entities is called ontological difference.

As we have discussed in the first chapter, Heidegger is aware that such an account of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** leads to two main problems. [1] In the first place, since every "mental compartment (...) is related and requires an object" (Heidegger, 1993, p.35) and since the actions of speaking and thinking are specific instantiations of mental compartments, it is impossible to speak and think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. [2] In the second place, as we have seen, it seems that Heidegger himself faces a contradiction. First, he assumes that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, second, he states that an entity is whatever we can refer to with an intentional activity. It should follow that it is not possible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** at all. However, since we do refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it seems exactly that the statement according to which we cannot refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** refers to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as something to which we cannot refer. In saying that we cannot refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, we

do refer to it. And that is Heidegger's contradiction.

Meinong does not directly face this kind of troubles because, according to his ontology, everything is an object including what makes all objects objects, that is the *objecthood* of all objects. Meinong does not endorse any ontological difference between the *objecthood* of an object and the object itself: he simply treats *Außersein* (which is the equivalent of the Heideggerian **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) as a normal object among other objects. If Heidegger is careful in not ascribing any **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, Meinong does not have any problem in claiming that *Außersein*, in virtue of its *being an object*, has *Außersein*. Since *Außersein* is an object, then it has the property of *being an object*.

Having said this, it is still true that, even without the endorsement of any ontological difference, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can represent a limit case in Meinong's ontology. Indeed, since Meinong shares with Heidegger the idea that any intentional activity is directed towards an object, this means that, if we think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is supposed to be an object as well. Moreover, since, according to Meinong, every time we refer to an object, we refer to something which has the properties that it is described as having, and given naïve *CP*, it is legitimate to think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as something that is not an object.

Not only can Meinong's ontology accommodate Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but it also faces the same worries. [1] In the first place, as in the Heideggerian framework, given that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, it immediately becomes ineffable as well. Since objectives are always about objects, it is necessary to have objects in the first place in order to be able to express something (namely an objective) about them. It also follows that something that is not an object necessarily becomes ineffable because there are no objectives that can be about it. Since it is impossible to have an objective without having an object and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, then it is impossible to have an objective about it. It is ineffable.<sup>28</sup> [2] Secondly, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object and since every time we refer to something we refer to an object, then it should not be possible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Nevertheless, exactly when we claim that it is not possible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in

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<sup>28</sup>Someone can object that my argument about the ineffability of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in the meinongian framework is invalid because, according to Meinong, objectives are grounded in objecta and not in objects understood as *Gegenstand*. However, since both objectives and objecta are objects (understood as *Gegenstand*), it is impossible to have an objective about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object (understood as *Gegenstand*) and, therefore, it is not an objectum either.

virtue of its *not being an object*, we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** turning it into what it is not, namely an object. In other words, if Meinong is right in claiming that everything that instantiates, at least, a property is an object, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** should not instantiate any property at all. However, when we claim that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, we actually state that it instantiates, at least, the property of *not having properties* and exactly this property belongs to the description that characterizes it. In **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s *Sosein*, there is, at least, the property of *not having properties*.<sup>29</sup>

Given that everything we can predicate something of is an object and given that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not object, then nothing is predicable of it. But, of course, we already predicate something about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely that nothing is predicable of it. As in Heidegger's metaphysics, this looks like an antinomy.

In his late production, Meinong himself presents a case which is similar to the Heideggerian one. In the second chapter of his *On Emotional Presentation* (1917), Meinong claims that there are some objects, which are 'defective' in the sense that they lack *Außersein* (cf. Kalsi, 1980). Since *Außersein* is the property of *being an object*, defective objects are not objects. Meinong is highly unclear about what defective objects are, but, given his own definition, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be rightly considered one of them. Since a defective object is something that lacks *Außersein*, namely something that is not an object, and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object either, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be considered a defective object.

According to the interpretation presented in the secondary literature, defective objects force Meinong to face a radical choice. On the one hand, he can abandon the idea that whatever we refer to is an object: in this way, he can accept the idea that, even though we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not necessarily an object.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Meinong can abandon the idea that there is something like a defective object: in this way, he can accept the idea that every time we refer to something we refer to an object

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<sup>29</sup>In **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s *Sosein*, there are also other properties. For instance, according to what we have claimed in chapter 1, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities. It follows that, in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s *Sosein*, there is the property of *being the ground of all entities*.

<sup>30</sup>In the more recent debate, this idea was supported by Kalsi (1980). According to Kalsi, a thought or an expression which fails to denote any *Gegenstand* is a thought or an expression which denotes a defective object. We may rephrase Kalsi's idea as follows: 'to denote a defective object' is only a pleonastic way of expressing referential/denotation-failure. There is no metaphysical/ontological significance in defective objects.

because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an object too. In this second case, Meinong abandons the idea that there is something that is not an object.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, these two options do not seem satisfactory because they give up some fundamental aspects of Meinong's theory. If we embrace the first option, we give up one of the most crucial idea of Meinong, namely a strong account of intentionality. If we embrace the second option, we give up the intuitive idea that, since we can refer to something that is not an object, something is not an object. Nevertheless, if we follow the interpretation of the late Heidegger given in chapter 1, there is also a third possibility.

As Heidegger, Meinong can simply accept the inconsistent nature of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In this sense, following Heidegger, Meinong can solve the problem moving from **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** – accepting its inconsistent nature. Here, we take inconsistent objects to be objects that instantiate inconsistent properties. For instance, the square triangle instantiates the property of *being square* and the property of *not being square* (exactly in virtue of its *being a triangle*). In this case, the *Sosein* of a square triangle, as in the case of all the other inconsistent objects we can think about, contains inconsistent properties. If this is the case, it can be possible to deal with **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and, in general, defective objects) in a similar way. Since, as we have seen, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object (because it is characterized as such) and it is an object (because we can refer to it), **Being<sub>MET</sub>** needs to instantiate inconsistent properties, namely the properties of *being an object* and the property of *not being an object*. Having said that, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is metaphysically inconsistent in a peculiar way. Indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not simply an object with inconsistent properties (as all the other inconsistent objects are) but it is, at the same time, an object and not an object. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has *Außersein* (namely, it instantiates the property of *being an object*) and, at the same time, it does not have *Außersein* (namely it does not instantiate the property of *being an object*).

As we have previously argued, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is contradictory in a different and more radical way than 'normal' inconsistent objects because *Außersein* is an *ur*-property. We have defined an *ur*-property as the property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. Indeed, all inconsistent objects instantiate inconsistent properties. As

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<sup>31</sup>In the more recent debate, this idea was supported by Rapaport (1982). According to Rapaport, a defective object is, indeed, an object which has one special feature: it is not well-founded with respect to its intentional relation – its aboutness. Self-reference and loop of intentional relation are good examples of such non-well-foundedness.

such, they all have a *Sosein* – a *Sosein* containing inconsistent properties. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is different because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** both has a *Sosein* and does not. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an object and not an object, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** instantiates the property of *being an object* and it instantiates the property of *not being an object*. In other words, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has *Außersein* and it does not have *Außersein*. Since, as we have argued in Section 2.1.3, having *Außersein* is having a *Sosein*, it follows that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has a *Sosein* (because it is an object and all objects have both a *Sosein* and *Außersein*) and it does not have a *Sosein* (because it is not an object and what is not an object does not have a *Sosein* and *Außersein*). Moreover, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is also self-identical and not self-identical. Following Priest, *Außersein* is interpreted as the property of *being an object* and the property of *being an object* is interpreted as the property of *being-self-identical*. Now, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has *Außersein* (because it is an object) and it does not have *Außersein* (because it is not an object), **Being<sub>MET</sub>** instantiates the property of *being self-identical* and not.

To conclude, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an extreme case of Meinong's ontology for the following reason. According to Meinong, everything we can refer to with an intentional activity is an object: Sherlock Holmes, my laptop, the number three, a unicorn and the square triangle are all objects (only). However, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** shows that Meinong's framework can accommodate also something that is an object and not an object as well. It is possible to have an object which is, so to speak, inside the totality of all objects and outside the totality of all objects. As we have discussed at the end of chapter 1 and using Heidegger's jargon, we can rephrase this idea as follows: **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is inside and outside the world (*Welt\**), namely the totality of everything that is.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>To conclude the present chapter, I would like to make it clear that, even though both Meinong's *Außersein* and Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are interpreted as the *objecthood* of an object, there is a substantial difference between the two. The difference is that Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is transcendental and, thus, completely different than all the other entities and properties or features of entities. As I have already specified in the first paragraph of section 3.4, Meinong's *Außersein* is, on the contrary, not different from other entities or properties – it is just an entity among other entities, and a property among other properties.

## Chapter 4

### *Nichtsein*

**Overview.** In this third chapter, we show that Heidegger's  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\text{MET}}$  is identical to nothingness. Both of them are entities and not entities. As such, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, they belong to the totality of entities (that is Heidegger's world) and not. Continuing the comparison started in chapter 2, we also show that some neo-meinongians (such as Routley, Priest and Jacquette) have recently proposed some interesting accounts of nothingness as well. Finally, merging both Heideggerian and the neo-meinongian approach to nothingness and  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\text{MET}}$ , we present a paraconsistent mereological system which is able to deliver a formal explanation of the metaphysical idea presented. Such a model also shows that it is possible to have an inconsistent account nothingness without falling into logical triviality.

**Structure.** In **Section 3.1**, we argue that  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\text{MET}}$  is identical to nothingness. In **Section 3.2**, we see how some neo-meinongian accommodate the idea that there is something that is not an object (such as  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\text{MET}}$  and nothingness). In **Section 3.3**, using both Heideggerian and neo-meinongian metaphysics, we develop a mereological theory that can reflect all the inconsistent metaphysical feature of  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\text{MET}}$  and nothingness. In **Section 3.4**, we present the paraconsistent logic employed by our mereological system, namely the weak relevant logic (DKQ). In **Section 3.5**, we present the proofs of the theorems discussed in the previous part of the chapter. In **Section 3.6**, we present some models which show that our mereological system is not logically trivial.

## 4.1 Heidegger and nothingness

As we have discussed in chapter 1 and footnote number 23 of chapter 2, Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has a lot of features: for instance, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the the ground of everything that is, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the feature of *being an object* of an object and, according to the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Following Heidegger, after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well. Heidegger thinks that, among all these features, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has also the feature of being identical to nothing. He does not mean that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not identical to anything, but he means that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to something, namely nothing. Indeed, according to Heidegger, 'nothing' refers to a thing and, as such, it is a substantive.

This position may strike contemporary philosophers as an obvious mistake. It is easy to suppose that Heidegger is simply confused because, as Carnap clarified, 'nothing' is a quantifier phrase, and not a noun phrase.<sup>1</sup> However, Heidegger is not confused at all. On the contrary, he is well aware that 'nothing' can be used as a quantifier, but he does not rule out the possibility of using 'nothing' as a noun phrase too. In *The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, he writes that "'Thinking about nothing' is ambiguous. First of all, it can mean 'not to think'" (Heidegger, 1978, p.3) In this first case, nothing is used as a quantifier: 'thinking about nothing' is understood as 'thinking about no thing'. Nevertheless, Heidegger also writes that: "secondly, 'thinking about nothing' can mean 'thinking about nothingness', which nonetheless means to think 'something'. In thinking of nothingness, or in the endeavor to think 'it', I am thoughtfully related to nothingness, and this is what thinking is about" (Heidegger, 1978, p.3). In this second case, nothingness is used as term which refer to something: 'thinking about nothing' is understood as 'thinking about a thing' called nothingness. From now on, we will use the term 'nothing' for the quantifier phrase and we will use the term 'nothingness' for the noun phrase.<sup>2</sup> At this point, even assuming that Heidegger is entitled to use nothingness

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<sup>1</sup>Carnap does not simply hold the position that nothing is a quantifier phrase but he also holds the position according to which nothing can *only* be a quantifier phrase. He famously writes: "The construction of the sentence (1) ['We seek the Nothing'] is simply based on the mistake of employing the word 'nothing' as a noun, because it is customary in ordinary language to use it in this form in order to construct a negative existential statement ... In a correct language, on the other hand, it is not a particular *name*, but a certain *logical form* of the sentence the serves this purpose" (Carnap, 1959, p.70).

<sup>2</sup>During a private conversation, Chris Mortensen accepted the possibility that the term 'nothing(ness)' refers to something. However, he raised an interesting issue, asking me how we know when 'nothing' is

as a noun phrase, two problems remain open. [1] What does Heidegger refer to when he refers to nothingness? [2] Why is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** identical to nothingness?

[1] Let's start addressing the first question. According to Heidegger, nothingness is "the negation of the totality of all entities" (Heidegger, 1967, p.63). This means that, if something is an entity, this something is not nothingness. In his *Contribution to Philosophy* (1989a), Heidegger proposes an interesting metaphor. Take the world, which is understood as the totality of all entities, and subtract from the world all entities. Of course, this is not enough to characterize nothingness as the negation of the totality of all entities, because something (that is an entity) is still left: what is left is a world, empty of any entity. Therefore, in order to obtain nothingness, it is necessary to remove the empty world too. Only at this point, we obtain nothingness. Moreover, from this characterization of nothingness, it also follows that nothingness itself is taken to be "the pure non-entity" (Heidegger, 1967, p. 63). If nothingness is the removal of all entities, nothingness is not an entity itself because, otherwise, it would be the presence of, at least, one entity, namely itself. As Heidegger claims: "nothingness is not a thing; it is not an entity" (Heidegger, 1967, p.71). Therefore, when Heidegger refers to nothingness, he refers to something that is not an entity.

[2] Let's continue discussing the second question. Both the first and the second Heidegger is explicit in claiming that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to nothingness. In agreement with Hegel, Heidegger claims that

Pure Being and pure Nothing are therefore the same. This proposition of Hegel is correct. Being and the Nothingness do belong together, not because both –from the point of view of the Hegelian concept of thought– agree in their indeterminateness and in immediacy, but rather because Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of *Dasein* which is held out into the nothing (Heidegger, 1967, p.75)

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used as a quantifier and when 'nothing' is used as a noun phrase. Unfortunately, I do not have a definite answer. My hypothesis is that we understand it only through the context. As Chris himself pointed out, when I blame my girlfriend because there is *nothing* in the fridge, I clearly do not mean to blame her because there is a scary metaphysical entity that gives me angst.

The same idea is defended in *The Question of Being*:

Only because the question ‘What is Metaphysics?’ thinks from the beginning of the climbing above, the transcendence, the *Being of being*, can it think of the negative of being, of *that* nothingness which just as originally is identical with Being (Heidegger, 1967, p.)

It is not easy to understand why Heidegger thinks that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness are identical. However, in some of his later works, he seems to support the following argument.

- [P1] **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is what it is that makes entities be  
 [P2] Nothingness is what it is that makes entities be  
 [C] Therefore, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is nothingness

The first premise is true by definition. On the one hand, as we discussed in chapter 1, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is characterized as the ground of all entities because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** makes all entities entities. All entities are entities (namely they are something and not nothing) in virtue of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. On the other hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood as the *being an entity* of an entity. Entities are entities exactly because they *are* something and not nothing – because they have **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, which makes them to be. It is more difficult to understand why the second premise is true. Heidegger seems to argue in the following way: nothingness makes entities be because an entity is (and can only be) in virtue of the fact that it is not nothing. In other words, an entity is something and not nothing because it stands out against nothingness. From this point of view, the necessary condition to have entities is to have nothingness too because, if there were no nothingness, entities could not stand against it. If there was no nothing, there could be no entities either. Finally, given the first premise and the second premise, the conclusion follows validly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>As Kris McDaniel pointed out in private conversation, the argument presented by Heidegger is valid if and only if what makes entities be is unique. However, Heidegger seems to be able to argue for the uniqueness of what makes entities be in the following way. Assuming the ontological difference, Heidegger believes that what makes entities be (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) is not itself an entity. If there is something other than **Being<sub>MET</sub>** that makes entities be, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the something else that makes entities be are different. If they are different, they are two. If they are two, they are two different things (aka entities). However, this is not possible, because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not a thing (aka entity) in the

From the characterization of nothingness discussed above and from the fact that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, two important consequences follow. First of all, since nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and since nothingness is the result of removing all entities from the totality of all entities (namely, from Heidegger's world), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is what remains after removing all entities from the world as well.

Secondly, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, in talking and thinking about nothingness, Heidegger faces the same paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Since nothingness is not an entity and since every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, it should be impossible to refer to nothingness. However, we do refer to nothingness in saying that, for instance, nothingness is not an entity. Moreover, since nothingness is not an entity and since every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, as soon as we claim that nothingness is not an entity, we turn nothingness into what nothingness is not. As in the case of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, it seems impossible to either think or speak about nothingness without facing a contradiction. Nothingness is not an entity (because it is characterized as such) and it is an entity (because we refer to nothingness and whatever we refer to is an entity). The paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the same paradox of nothingness.<sup>4</sup>

As we have discussed in chapter 1, the early Heidegger (namely the Heidegger before the *Kehre*\*) thinks that, exactly because referring to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** leads us to face a contradiction, talking and thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is meaningless. Of course, the same position holds for nothingness too. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he states that "he who speaks of nothingness does not know what he is doing. In speaking of nothingness, he makes it into something. (...) He contradicts himself. But a contradictory discourse offends against the fundamental rule of discourse" (Heidegger, 1966, p.23). Since "nothingness is illogical", "nothingness is contradictory and, thus, senseless" (Heidegger, 196, p. 113). Nevertheless, after the *Kehre*\*, Heidegger changes his mind claiming that the

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first place. Similar arguments can be found in *Contribution to Philosophy* (1989a, Paragraph 146). Of course, I am not endorsing this argument. I am just trying to show that Heidegger may have a reason to endorse the uniqueness of what makes entities be.

<sup>4</sup>Heidegger points out that even the question of nothingness (namely, what is nothingness?), exactly like the question of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely, what is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**?), is irreparably compromised because, when we ask what nothingness is, we assume that nothingness is an entity of which it is possible to ask something. However, since nothingness is not an entity, nothingness cannot be that entity of which we ask about. Heidegger explains this idea in the following way: "What is nothingness? Our very first approach to the question has something unusual about it. In our asking, we posit the nothing [namely nothingness] (...) as a being. But that is exactly what it is distinguished from" (Heidegger, 1967, p.62)

truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the *Ereignis\**, namely the event in which **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is revealed as what is both an entity and not an entity. Heidegger is aware that, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to nothingness, the *Ereignis\** is also the event in which nothingness is revealed as what is an entity and what is not an entity. On the one hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is outside the world (namely outside the totality of all entities) because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, and, at the same time, it is inside the world (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well). On the other hand, since nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, nothingness itself is both outside the world (because it is not an entity) and inside the world (because it is an entity). It is also important to remember that the late Heidegger thinks that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as the property of *being self-identical*: all entities are self-identical because all entities are entities. This means that, in the *Ereignis\**, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical (because all entities are self-identical, including **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) and not self-identical (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, it is not self-identical either). Finally, since nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, nothingness is both self-identical and not self-identical as well.

The late Heidegger thinks that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are both entities and not entities. They are both part of the totality of all entities because they are entities and, at the same time, they are not part of the totality of all entities because they are not entities. Moreover, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are both self-identical and not. According to Heidegger, the *Ereignis\**, namely the event in which *Dasein\** reaches the truth of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, is exactly the realization that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are contradictory. On the one hand, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are outside the world (the totality of everything that is) because nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the result of removing all entities from the world. As such, they are not entities either because, otherwise, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** would not be the result of removing all entities but the presence of, at least, one entity, namely themselves. On the other hand, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are inside the world (the totality of everything that is) because we refer to them and everything we refer to is an entity, including nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

In what follows, we see how the current debate in neo-meinongianism can help us to have a better metaphysical understanding of Heidegger's notions of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Moreover, we provide a mereological system that can formally make sense of these ideas. We discuss the formal structure of Heidegger's *Ereignis\** and we show

that, even though such a structure is inconsistent, it is not logically trivial.

## 4.2 Neo-Meinongianism and nothingness

As we have shown in chapter 2, the problem of Heidegger can be framed in Meinong's terms as well. Nevertheless, beside some cryptic remarks about the so-called defective objects (namely objects without *Außersein*), Meinong himself does not give any clear account of what a 'non-entity' (such as Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is. On the contrary, a recent debate about nothingness (namely about what is not an object) has taken place among neo-meinongians. More specifically, in the current debate, it is possible to find three neo-meinongian characterizations of nothingness.

[1] The first characterization is proposed by Graham Priest. He grounds his account on the intuition according to which nothingness is “*absolutely nothing*: the absence of everything” (Priest 2014b, p. 151). From this intuition, it also follows that, because nothingness “is the absence of all things”, nothingness itself “is nothing. It is no thing, no object” (Priest 2014b, p. 151). Priest tries to do justice to this idea, characterizing nothingness as the mereological sum of everything that is contained in the empty set. First of all, since Priest (2014a, 2014b, 2014c) takes *being an object* as *being self-identical*, he thinks that what is not an object is not self-identical. Secondly, working under the assumption that the empty set contains not self-identical elements, it follows that the empty set contains no thing at all. Because the empty set contains non-self-identical elements and what is not self-identical is not an object, the empty set is indeed empty. This is also the reason why, if we try to collect what is contained in the empty set, we get no things at all – the absolute absence of everything, namely nothingness. Therefore, Priest takes nothingness to be the mereological sum of everything that is contained in the empty set. Fusing no things, he gets nothingness.

[2] The second characterization (which is very similar to the first one) is proposed by Richard Routley. While Priest infers the *non-objecthood* of nothingness from the idea that nothingness is the absence of everything, Routley (appealing to the naïve *CP*) directly characterizes nothingness as that which is not an object in the first place. He thinks that nothingness is not something and that something is not nothingness. Consistently with

this idea, in his unpublished work, Richard Routley claims that “nothingness is not an item” (Sylvan, Box23). In Routley’s terminology, ‘item’ is a synonym of ‘object’ or ‘entity’. Unfortunately, there is no further characterization of nothingness because Routley has never had the possibility to work out the details of this idea due to his premature death. Note that, even though both Priest and Routley reach the conclusion that nothingness is not an object, they understand objecthood in a somewhat different way. While Priest takes, as we have seen, *being an object* as *being self-identical*, Routley takes *being an object* as *being describable* (Sylvan, Box23). Consequently, since nothingness is not an object and whatever is describable is an object, then “nothingness is undescrivable” (Sylvan, Box23).

**[3]** Finally, the third and last characterization is proposed by Dale Jacquette (2013; 2015). He follows the intuition according to which nothingness is simply that object that we refer to (because we do refer to it right now!) when, sitting around a table, we discuss Sartre’s *le Neant* or, during a philosophical conference, we try to answer the following question: why is there something and not nothing? Thus, he takes nothingness as intendable. But he also claims that it is nothing more than this. It has “no predicational frills” (Jacquette, 2013, p. 108), since if it had such a frill as *being a cat*, then it would no longer be nothingness, but something which is a cat. Consequently, nothingness is something which has only a minimal property required for it to be intendable. Jacquette characterizes nothingness as an object with only one (constitutive) property, that is the property of *being-intendable and nothing more*.

Given these three different ways of describing nothingness, some important consequences follow. First of all, working with a meinongian account of intentionality, the first two characterizations of nothingness (namely **[1]** and **[2]**) directly lead to the same paradox faced by Heidegger. Since every time we refer to something, we refer to an object, then, in saying that nothingness is not an object, we refer to nothingness turning it into its opposite, namely an object. According to these definitions, nothingness is not an object, but, at the same time, since we refer to it, nothingness is an object as well. For some philosophers, this contradiction is certainly unacceptable. However, this is not the case for Priest and Routley: as the late Heidegger accepts the contraction implied by **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, they accept the contradiction implied by nothingness. According to Rout-

ley, since “for whatever is not an item is thereby an item”, nothingness is an item and not an item as well. (Sylvan, Box23). According to Priest, nothingness “is the most strange, contradictory thing. It both is and is not an object; it both is and is not something” (Priest 2014b, p. 151). Both Priest and Routley share the idea that, in Heidegger’s jargon, nothingness (as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) reveals itself as what is an entity and not an entity. Secondly, contrary to Priest and Routley, Jacqueline does not need to buy any inconsistency because, as we have already outlined, he simply characterizes nothingness as that which is an object – an object whose (constitutive) property is only the property of *being intendable and nothing more*. Consequently, he avoids any paradoxical situation *à la* Heidegger. As such, it cannot be used to explain the account of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** defended by Heidegger after the *Kehre*\*.<sup>5</sup>

### 4.3 Nothingness as an inconsistent object

After discussing which neo-meinongian accounts of nothingness are compatible with the Heideggerian one, we propose our own account, which reflects the Heideggerian idea that both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities and not. Such an account is grounded on the conditional claim that, if we assume the Heideggerian (and the Meinongian) thesis about intentionality according to which everything we refer to is an object, then both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, characterized as the absence of everything (or characterized as *being not an object*), are contradictory (namely they are objects and not objects). Starting from the idea that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities or objects, Heidegger faces the same paradox that the neo-meinongians Priest and Routley have dealt with. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities and since, according to Heidegger, everything we can think about (refer to) is an entity, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities as well. Nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities and not entities at the same time. Thus, they are inconsistent entities.

Nevertheless, in order to formally describe Heidegger’s nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we start our investigation from a characterization of nothingness and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** that

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<sup>5</sup>It is important to remark that, if our aim is to characterize something that is *not* an object, Jacqueline’s strategy fails. Indeed, according to him, nothingness is an object – more precisely, it is an object with only one property, namely the property of *being intendable and nothing more*. There are no doubts that Jacqueline’s nothingness is a weird object: most objects have more properties than the only property of *being intendable and nothing more*. However, Jacqueline’s nothingness is still an object.

is different than the one presented by Priest and Routley. On the one hand, as with Priest, we follow the intuition according to which nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the absence of all entities. As Heidegger himself has claimed, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are what we get when, given Heidegger's world (namely the domain of all entities), we remove from it every entity. What is left is exactly no thing at all – nothingness and, thus, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. It follows that, as we have already anticipated, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not things because, otherwise, they would be the presence of something, namely themselves. On the other hand, diverging from Priest but following Heidegger, we do not take nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** to be the mereological sum of everything that is contained in the empty set, but we characterize them as the complement of totality, which is exactly what we get when we have no objects at all. As Heidegger's world, the totality is what fuses (or collects) all entities together. Such a characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** perfectly fits the Heideggerian one: according to Heidegger, both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the result of emptying the world and, as we have already discussed in the previous chapters, Heidegger takes the world to be the totality of all entities.

At this point, someone may have some methodological concerns. Indeed, why and how did we move from Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** to mereological notions such as 'fusion', 'complement' and 'totality'? The answer is straightforward. Let's start saying that, if we work under the Heideggerian assumption that 'nothingness' and '**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**' are terms which refer to something, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** themselves are something which require a metaphysical explanation. In other words, we have moved from Heidegger's ontology to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because exactly this ontology is the *conditio sine qua non* to even start to be worried about something like nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Indeed, only because of the assumptions of Heidegger's philosophy, are we able to investigate what nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are and how nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are characterized. Having said that, our characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** also employs some notions that seem to naturally belong to a mereological framework and, as such, this requires a formal explanation too. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the absence of all things, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any '*part*': they are perfectly empty. What is perfectly empty is the opposite of the '*totality*', which, on the contrary, is perfectly full because it '*fuses*' everything. From this point of view, it is natural to take nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as the '*com-*

*plement*' of the totality. This is how we have moved from nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** to mereological concepts.

According to Heidegger's characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, if we subtract each object from the totality of all objects, what is left is no thing at all – nothing, indeed. Since, according to Heidegger, nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, what is left is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too. Then, consistently with Heidegger's understanding of what an object is, let's define the totality (or, in Heidegger's jargon, the world) as the mereological sum of all objects. As we have already discussed in the Section 2.2.2, according to Heidegger, the totality sums up objects that exist (namely objects that have *Existenz*<sup>\*</sup>, such as human beings), objects that are material or real (namely objects that have *Sachheit*<sup>\*</sup>, such as the Empire State Building) and objects that neither exist nor are material or real (namely abstract objects, such as prime numbers).

At this point, let's note two important considerations. First of all, such a universal mereological sum collects all intentional objects regardless of their ontological status: everything (literally everything!) is collected in the totality. This is crucial because, if this is not the case, the complement of the totality would still have as its parts some nonexistent objects such as Pegasus and Sherlock Holmes. However, this is not possible because nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not things (or objects) and, as such, they do not have any object as their part, not even nonexistent things like Pegasus and Sherlock Holmes. Secondly, given the metaphysics previously introduced, since it is possible to refer to the complement of the totality, the complement of the totality becomes an object as well. If this is the case, then the complement of the totality has to be a part of the totality too. From this point of view, the complement of the totality represents Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because it is the absence of all objects and it is not an object itself. However, since everything we refer to is an object and since we refer to the complement of the totality as well, then the complement of the totality is an object too. Since the totality collects all objects (since, in Heidegger's terms, the world contains everything that is), the complement of the totality is part of the totality too. As we have seen in chapter 1, this idea is described by Heidegger as the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the event of the truth of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. According to this event, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the complement of the totality) are not part of the world (which is the totality) because they are not entities. However, at the same time, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are part of the world because they are entities too.

In what follows, we present a mereological system which formally explains Heidegger's *Ereignis*\*. This mereological system (called **PM** + **(\*)**) introduces a complement of the totality which has all the metaphysical features previously ascribed to Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. As we will see later on, in **PM** + **(\*)**, the complement of the totality is not identical to the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals. However, only the complement of the totality can represent Heidegger's nothingness or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. because we assume that another property of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the property of *being disjointed from the totality*. Indeed, according to the ontological difference, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities at all, both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any part in common with the world (with the totality collecting all entities). Now, since the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals is not disjoint from the totality in **PM** + **(\*)**, only the complement of the totality can represent Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** exactly in virtue of its being disjointed from the totality.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.4 Paraconsistent mereology

In this section, we try to do justice to the metaphysical story presented above, developing two theories of mereology which include the complement of the totality. To begin with, we discuss some of the basic notions employed in our formal systems.

First of all, let us fix the notion of totality. The totality (or Heidegger's world) is the sum of all objects. Then, what is an object? Following Heidegger, we assume that, if it is possible to refer to  $x$ ,  $x$  is an object. However, mereology lacks such an intentional vocabulary. In order to accommodate this lack, we simply appeal to Heidegger's account of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** according to which *being an object* is defined as *being self-identical*.<sup>7</sup> Given such a definition of objecthood, the totality is defined as the sum of the self-identicals.

Secondly, let us cast some light on the notion of the complement of the totality. In standard mereology, the complement of an object  $x$  is defined as the sum of all objects disjoint from  $x$ : we adopt this standard definition of complement. Intuitively speaking, the complement of  $x$  is the remainder of the subtraction of  $x$  from the totality. Follow-

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<sup>6</sup>The following technicalities are the extension of a co-authored work with Naoya Fujikawa.

<sup>7</sup>Heidegger's understanding of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as *being self-identical* is discussed in the first chapter. For more details, see Section 1.1, point [3].

ing Heidegger, if we subtract everything from the totality, what is left is nothingness or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Thus, the complement of the totality is a good candidate for a mereological implementation of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** characterized as the absence of everything. So far, the story is straightforward. But a twist is required here. In mereology, an object has its complement if and only if something is not its part. Therefore, the totality has its complement if and only if something is not a part of the totality. However, the totality is the sum of every objects and, thus, everything is its part. Therefore, in classical mereology (and in any other mereology whose base logic is not paraconsistent), nothing is not a part of the totality, and the totality doesn't have a complement. To obtain the complement of the totality, we take two nonstandard steps. First, we assume that something is not a part of the totality (even though it is). Second, to accommodate the contradiction raised by this assumption, we adopt a paraconsistent logic as the basic logic of our theories.

#### 4.4.1 Empty objects, classic mereology and Weber and Cotnoir's system

Let's begin by explaining the reason why Weber and Cotnoir's mereological system gives us an appropriate background to develop a formal theory of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, understood as the complement of the totality.

[1] The first reason is concerned with the broader philosophical aim of Weber and Cotnoir's system, which is, somehow, similar to ours. In their 'Inconsistent Boundaries' (2015), Weber and Cotnoir try to give an account of empty objects. As they have pointed out, empty objects are often described through the inevitable usage of the empty set; nonetheless,  $\emptyset$  (however it is defined) is still something and, as such, "this is no more mysterious than the number zero" (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p.1273). Weber and Cotnoir aim for something more radical than an object (an empty set) which is empty of any element: they want an empty object which is genuinely, undoubtably empty of any thing, including itself. They aim at "an empty object, which is *nothing*" (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p.1279). Now, the Heideggerian characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** presented above perfectly fits the aim of Weber and Cotnoir's system. Since they take empty objects to be *nothing* at all, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the empty objects *par excellence*. What is more empty than something that is not an object

at all? What is more empty than nothingness itself? We have decided to work in the framework introduced by Weber and Cotnoir because, according to Heidegger's characterization, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are just a particularly extreme version of an empty object. The reason why Weber and Cotnoir did not discuss nothingness as well will be clear later on.

[2] The second reason why we have decided to engage with Weber and Cotnoir's mereology is concerned with purely technical issues. As we have claimed before, the late Heidegger (namely the Heidegger after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>) endorses the idea that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are inconsistent because they are characterized as *both* an object and not an object. This means that, as in the case of Weber and Cotnoir's 'Inconsistent Boundaries' (2015), a paraconsistent mereology is necessarily required. However, to see why this system is particularly suitable for our purposes, we need to start discussing mereology in more detail. Let's begin with a brief introduction to classical mereology.

Following Weber and Cotnoir (2015), we do not start taking into consideration the standard presentations of 'general extensional mereology' (**GEM**) in Casati and Varzi (1999), or that of 'classical extensional mereology' (**CEM**) in Simons (1987), but an equivalent non-standard axiomatization proposed by Hovda (2009, Part 4). Weber and Cotnoir made this choice because, as they claim (2015), Hovda's axiom system is the best one, if we want to go from a classical setting to a paraconsistent one. Such an axiomatization is composed of three main parts. The first part is the axiomatization of classical logic (let's call them **HMO**) with identity =, and with  $\supset$  the material conditional. The second part is a set of definitions. In Hovda's mereological system, *Parthood*,  $\leq$ , is taken to be primitive. Moreover, two objects overlap when they have at least one part in common and two objects are disjoint when they do not have any part in common. [a] *Overlap* and [b] *Disjoint* are formally defined in the following way

$$(1) \text{ a. } x \bullet y =_{\text{df}} \exists z(z \leq x \wedge z \leq y)$$

$$\text{ b. } x \uparrow y =_{\text{df}} \neg x \bullet y$$

Finally, *Fusion*, namely the mereological sum of two or more parts, is taken to be the  $\leq$ -least upper bounds of the parts that are fused together. Formally, it is expressed in the following way:

$$(2) \text{ lub}(x, A) =_{\text{df}} \forall y(A \supset y \leq x) \wedge (\forall w \forall y(A \supset y \leq w) \supset x \leq w)$$

This means that a *lub* of the *As* is just an object that has all the *As* as parts (i.e. an upper bound), and it is part of any other upper bound of the *As* (i.e. least). The third and last part is an axiomatization of classical mereology presented as follows:

$$\mathbf{HM1} \quad \forall x(x \leq x)$$

$$\mathbf{HM2} \quad \forall x \forall y((x \leq y \wedge y \leq x) \supset x = y)$$

$$\mathbf{HM3} \quad \forall x \forall y \forall z((x \leq y \wedge y \leq z) \supset x \leq z)$$

$$\mathbf{HM4} \quad \forall x(\exists y(y \not\leq x) \supset \exists z(z \not\leq x \wedge \forall y((y \not\leq x \supset y \leq z) \wedge (y \not\leq z \supset y \leq x))))$$

$$\mathbf{HM5} \quad \exists x A \supset \exists z \text{lub}(z, A)$$

$$\mathbf{HM6} \quad \exists x \exists y(y \neq x) \supset \neg \exists x \forall y(x \leq y)$$

From axiom **HM1**, **HM2** and **HM3**, it follows that *Parthood* is reflexive, antisymmetric and transitive; thus, it is partial order. From axiom **HM4**, it follows that, given an object  $x$ , there is an other object,  $\bar{x}$ , namely the complement of  $x$ , made up of all and only the objects that do not overlap  $x$ . However, from **HM4**, it also follows that, if the object  $x$  is the totality (namely the mereological sum of everything), then  $x$  does not have a complement. According to axiom **HM5**, given some arbitrary objects *As*, there is always a fusion collecting these objects *As*. Finally, since axiom **HM6** claims that there is nothing which is a part of everything, there are no empty objects.

For both Weber and Cotnoir's aim and ours, Hovda's mereological system presented here is unsatisfactory because it is based on classical logic (**HM0**). On the one hand, in their paper, Weber and Cotnoir give an inconsistent account of boundaries and, on the other hand, we propose an inconsistent account of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In both cases, a paraconsistent logic is required in order not to fall into logical triviality. Thus, in order to obtain a paraconsistent mereological system which is able to deal with contradictions without any logical explosion, Weber and Cotnoir presents the following revision of **HM0** - **HM6**. Call this new paraconsistent system PM. The language of PM is the standard first-order language with identity, a two place predicate which represents the parthood relation,  $\leq$ , and a sentential constant,  $t$ . PM consists of the following axioms:

**PM0** Axioms of the weak relevant logic DKQ

**PM1**  $\forall x(x \leq x)$

**PM2**  $\forall x \forall y((x \leq y \wedge y \leq x) \leftrightarrow x = y)$

**PM3**  $\forall x \forall y \forall z((x \leq y \wedge y \leq z) \rightarrow x \leq z)$

**PM4**  $\forall x(\exists y(y \not\leq x) \mapsto \exists z(z \Vdash x \wedge \forall y((y \Vdash x \rightarrow y \leq z) \wedge (y \Vdash z \rightarrow y \leq x))))$

**PM5**  $\exists x A \mapsto \exists z \text{lub}(z, A)$

**PM6**  $\exists x \exists y(y \neq x) \mapsto \neg \exists x \forall y(x \leq y)$

**PM7**  $\forall x \forall y(x \leq y \mapsto \forall z(z \bullet x \rightarrow z \bullet y))$

**PM0** refers to the axiomatization of DKQ, which appears in Appendix 1. For the moment, it is enough to mention that DKQ is a weak relevant logic which has been used to develop, for instance, paraconsistent set theory (cf. Priest, 2006). One feature of this logic is that  $\rightarrow$  is a relevant conditional, which is detachable and contraposable. In the application proposed by Cotnoir and Weber, this logic has also an enthymematic conditional,  $\mapsto$ , which is defined by using a  $t$ -constant. The  $t$ -constant is a constant which satisfies (3) for any  $A$ .<sup>8</sup>

$$(3) A \dashv\vdash t \rightarrow A$$

$\mapsto$  is defined as follows:

$$(4) A \mapsto B =_{\text{df}} A \wedge t \rightarrow B$$

$\mapsto$  is detachable but not contraposable.

By using the enthymematic conditionals, fusion,  $\leq$ -least upper bound, is defined as follows.

$$(5) \text{lub}(x, A) =_{\text{df}} \forall y(A \mapsto y \leq x) \wedge (\forall w \forall y(A \mapsto y \leq w) \mapsto x \leq w)$$

<sup>8</sup>In Weber and Cotnoir (2015), it is not explicit why they introduce the enthymematic conditional. However, it is clear that such a conditional it is introduced to be able to problem the non-triviality of their axiomatic system. Without the enthymematic conditional, the non-triviality proof of PM does not work.

The notions of overlap and disjoint are defined in the same way as (1).

So, **PM1** - **PM7** axiomatize Weber and Cotnoir's paraconsistent mereology. As in the case of **HM1** - **HM7**, from axiom **PM1** (which is *Reflexivity*), **PM2** (which is *Antisimmetry*) and **PM3** (which is *Transitivity*), it follows that parthood is partial order. According to **PM5**, given some arbitrary objects  $A$ s, there is always a fusion collecting these objects  $A$ s while, according to **PM6**, nothing is a part of everything. Finally, **PM7** claims that, if an object (let's call it  $x$ ) is a part of another object (let's call it  $y$ ), then all the parts that overlap with  $x$  overlap with  $y$  as well. **PM7** is a theorem of classical mereology, which nonetheless fails to be provable in this paraconsistent mereological system. For our purpose, the problem is that, even though **PM4** gives De Morgan complements,  $\bar{x}$  for every  $x$  except the totality. Therefore, as in the case of **HM4**, the totality does not have any complement. Since we define Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as the complement of the totality, a complement of the totality is required. For this reason, in the following sections, on the basis of Weber and Cotnoir's system, we explore two theories of mereology which have the complement of the totality, comparing them with Heidegger's account of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

#### 4.4.2 **PM+(\*)**

Let us call our first theory **PM+(\*)**. As stated above, **PM+(\*)** is based on **PM** in Weber and Cotnoir (2015): it consists of all axioms of **PM** and the following axiom, which claims that something is outside the totality.

$$(*) \exists x \exists y (x \not\leq y \wedge \text{lub}(y, z = z))$$

Now, it is easy to see that  $(*)$  immediately introduces an inconsistency in the system. Indeed, since everything is collected in the totality and since this axiom stipulates that there is something outside the totality, **PM+(\*)** already contains an inconsistency. Moreover, in our theory,  $(*)$  allows us to introduce the complement of any  $x$ , including the totality. Let us write the  $\leq$ -least upper bound of  $A$  as  $\text{lub}[x|A]$ .<sup>9</sup> Then,  $\text{lub}[x|x = x]$  is the totality, since, given **PM1** and **PM2**, everything is self-identical. The complement of  $x$  is defined as follows:

$$(6) \bar{x} =_{\text{df}} \text{lub}[y|y \not\leq x]$$

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<sup>9</sup>That is, ' $\text{lub}[x|A]$ ' is the term which uniquely satisfies  $\text{lub}(x, A)$ .

Given this definition,  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ , that is, the complement of the totality, is legitimately introduced in  $PM+(\ast)$ . The definite description ‘ $lub[x|A]$ ’ is licensed if and only if something uniquely satisfies  $lub(x, A)$ . The uniqueness of  $\leq$ -least upper bound is already proven by Weber and Cotnoir (see Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1280). Given PM5, to show that something is a  $\leq$ -least upper bound of  $As$ , it is enough to show that something satisfies  $A$ . Now, from  $(\ast)$ , something is not a part of  $lub[x|x=x]$ . This and PM4 entail that something is disjoint from  $lub[x|x=x]$ , that is, something satisfies the defining condition of  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Thus, we have it.

At this point, it is worthwhile to mention Weber and Cotnoir’s argument against the complement of the Totality. Suppose that  $\perp$  is an absurdity constant such that for any  $A$ ,  $\perp \rightarrow A$ . Taking the complement of the totality as  $lub[x|\perp]$ , they deny the complement of the totality, since ‘nothing satisfies’  $\perp$  ‘on pain of triviality’ (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1283). Our theories reflect this consideration to the extent that they lack  $lub[x|\perp]$ : because  $PM+(\ast)$  and  $PM+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)$ , which is introduced in section 3.3.5, are non-trivial (see Appendix 3), nothing satisfies  $\perp$  and, thus, there is nothing which is the  $lub[x|\perp]$  there. However, this doesn’t mean that  $PM+(\ast)$  lacks the complement of the totality defined as  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Indeed, their non-triviality shows that  $x \not\downarrow lub[x|x=x]$  is not absurd in them: it is not a theorem that for any  $A$ ,  $x \not\downarrow lub[x|x=x] \rightarrow A$ .

Now we have the totality and its complement in mereology. Let us next see how they behave in  $PM+(\ast)$ . In particular, in the next section, we examine some theorems concerning  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  in  $PM+(\ast)$  and show that they adequately reflect metaphysical considerations about Heidegger’s nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

#### 4.4.3 Theorems of $PM+(\ast)$

The first set of theorems of  $PM+(\ast)$  is (7) (proofs of (7)s are found in Appendix 1).

- (7) a.  $\forall x(x \leq lub[x|x=x])$   
 b.  $\forall x(\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq x)$   
 c.  $\forall x(x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]})$   
 d.  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \not\downarrow lub[x|x=x]$

It is possible to interpret the (7)s in two ways. The first interpretation is purely concerned with mereology. From this point of view, we can say that (7a) and (7b) shows that, as it is expected, the Totality is the top element and that its complement is the bottom element. In particular, (7b) also shows that the complement of the Totality is a null entity: in mereology, the bottom is a null entity in the sense that, summing up the null entity with any object  $x$ , we always obtain  $x$ .<sup>10</sup> Finally, (7d) says that the complement of the totality is disjoint from the totality.

The second interpretation makes use of Heidegger's metaphysics. Indeed, the (7)s reflect some features of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. On the one hand, (7a) shows that Heidegger's world (namely the totality of all entities) collects everything that is (an entity). On the other hand, (7c) shows that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any part and, therefore, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are completely empty. They are not entities at all. Moreover, exactly because nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities, according to (7b), they can be part of everything. As we have previously explained, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are *non-entities* (cf. Heidegger, 1967), if we sum them up with an entity  $x$ , we just obtain  $x$ . Finally, according to (7d), since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities, they are both disjoint from the totality of all entities. Following the interpretation given in the first chapter, as Plotinus' One and Saint John's God, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are both beyond the world or, so to speak, completely outside from the world (understood as the totality of all objects). This first set of theorems captures the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** when they are simply considered not entities.

The second set of theorems of PM+(\*) consists of the negations of (7) (proofs of (8)s are found in Appendix 1 as well).

- (8) a.  $\neg \forall x (x \leq \text{lub}[x|x=x])$   
 b.  $\neg \forall x (\overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} \leq x)$   
 c.  $\neg \forall x (x \not\leq \overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]})$   
 d.  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} \not\Downarrow \text{lub}[x|x=x]$

---

<sup>10</sup>This is because  $x \leq y$  iff  $x \sqcup y = y$ , where  $\sqcup$  is the binary sum operation defined as  $\text{lub}[z : z = x \vee z = y]$  (see Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1281).

Once again, it is possible to interpret the (8)s in two ways. Let's start with the interpretation that is purely concerned with mereological aspects. (8a) shows that there is something that is not part of the totality of all objects. (8b) claims that is not the case that the complement of the totality is part of every object and (8c) shows that the complement of the totality is not perfectly empty. Finally, according to (8d), the complement of the totality is not disjoint from the totality.

The (8)s reflect some features of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as well. According to (8a), there is something that is not part of Heidegger's world (understood as the totality of all entities): indeed, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities (because everything we refer to is an entity and we refer to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**); nonetheless, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not belong to Heidegger's world (understood as the totality of all entities) because they are characterized as something that is not an entity and, as such, they do not belong to the totality of all entities. (8c) shows that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not perfectly empty and, as such, they are entities. Finally, (8d) claims that, exactly because both Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities, they are not disjoint from the world (from the totality of all objects). This second set of theorems captures the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** when they are considered as entities or, using Heidegger's expression, as something that *are*.

Finally, in the present context, the complement of the totality (namely nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is self-identical and not self-identical (proofs are in Appendix 2).

$$(9) \quad \text{a. } \overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} = \overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]}$$

$$\text{b. } \overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} \neq \overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]}$$

From an Heideggerian point of view, these last results make sense as well. Indeed, as we have already seen, we take the complement of the totality to be nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Following Heidegger's account of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we also interpret the property of *being self-identical* as the property of *being an object*. At this point, since, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities and not entities, both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (represented as the complement of the totality) are self-identical (because they are entities) and not self-identical (because they are not entities). This is what is shown in (9).

In this way,  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  contains not a few contradictions. Someone may worry that  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  is trivial in the sense that everything is true in it. However,  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  is not trivial. We show the non-triviality of  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  in Appendix 2.

What follows is a summary of what we have done until now. The present theorems show some formal features of how the complement of the totality and the totality behave in this mereological system. As we have already stated, we regard the complement of the totality in mereology as a formal implementation of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, given his characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as the absence of everything. We have also shown that the formal features of the complement of the totality match Heidegger's account of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Let's recapitulate why this is actually the case.

To begin with, recall that, according to Heidegger, we adopt the following characterization of objecthood and non-objecthood.

- (10) a.  $x$  is an object if and only if  $x$  is self-identical
- b.  $x$  is not an object if and only if  $x$  is not self-identical

Given this, (9) means that the complement of the totality (namely nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is not an object (because it is not self-identical) and, at the same time, it is an object (because it is self-identical). According to the late Heidegger, the truth of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>) shows that both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** have exactly these elusive features. As we have seen in chapter 1, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> is *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>'s realization that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not objects and objects. On the one hand, they are not objects because Heidegger endorses the ontological difference. According to the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object and, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, nothingness is not an object either. On the other hand, they are objects because everything we refer to is an object and we refer to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Moreover, from the fact that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not objects, (7b), (7c) and (7d) follow; from the fact that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are object, (8b), (8c) and (8d) follow.

First, consider the (7)s and, in particular, (7c). As we have seen, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** should have no parts, either existent or nonexistent. Since nothingness

and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not an object, how could they have some (existent or nonexistent) objects as its part at all? Indeed, as (7c) shows, no object is a part of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, since they are characterized as the absence of all objects. Neither the Eiffel tower nor Sherlock Holmes is a part of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are partly a result of removing them. (7d) and (7b) reflect the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** which immediately follow from this. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any part, then they do not have any common part with anything, including the totality, that is, (7d). Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** don't have any part, they are a null thing. Now, it is natural to think that, if we fuse a null thing, which has no part at all, to something, nothing will actually change as when we sum zero with any other number.

Now, consider the (8)s. They reflects the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** which follows from the fact that they are objects. Even though Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are objects, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** have no object as their parts. Therefore, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not parts of themselves ((8b)). Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are objects too, and every object has itself as its part, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** have themselves as their parts ((8c)). From this, it immediately follows that nothingness and the totality has nothingness as their common part ((8d)), and thus they overlap with each other. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, the same hold for **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

## 4.5 Appendix 1: logic

The language is that of first order logic with identity and membership. The usual shorthand is used:  $A \vee B$  for  $\neg(\neg A \wedge \neg B)$ ;  $A \leftrightarrow B$  for  $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (B \rightarrow A)$ ;  $\exists$  is  $\neg\forall\neg$ .

**Axioms.** All instances of the following schemata are theorems:

$$\text{I } A \rightarrow A$$

$$\text{IIa } A \wedge B \rightarrow A$$

$$\text{IIb } A \wedge B \rightarrow B$$

$$\text{III } A \wedge (B \vee C) \rightarrow (A \wedge B) \vee (A \wedge C) \text{ [distribution]}$$

**IV**  $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (B \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow C)$  [*conjunctive syllogism*]

**V**  $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (A \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow B \wedge C)$

**VI**  $(A \rightarrow B) \leftrightarrow (\neg B \rightarrow \neg A)$  [*constraposition*]

**VII**  $A \leftrightarrow \neg\neg A$  [*double negation elimination*]

**VIII**  $A \vee \neg A$  [*excluded middle*]

**IX**  $(\forall x)A \rightarrow A(a \ / \ x)$

**X**  $(\forall x)(A \rightarrow B) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow (\forall x)B)$  [*with  $x$  to free in  $A$* ]

**XI**  $(\forall x)(A \vee B) \rightarrow A \vee (\forall x)B$  [*with  $x$  to free in  $A$* ]

[**VIII**] implies the law of non-contradiction,  $\neg(A \wedge \neg A)$ .

**Rules.** The following rules are validity preserving:

**I**  $A, B \vdash A \wedge B$  [*adjunction*]

**II**  $A, A \rightarrow B \vdash B$  [*modus ponens*]

**III**  $A \vdash (\forall x)A$  [*universal generalization*]

**IV**  $A \rightarrow B, C \rightarrow B \vdash (B \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow B)$  [*hypothetical syllogism*]

**V**  $x = y \vdash A(x) \leftrightarrow A(y)$  [*substitution*]

## 4.6 Appendix 2: proofs of theorems

**proof of (7)** (7a) immediately follows from that  $\forall x(x = x)$  and  $\forall x(x = x \mapsto x \leq \text{lub}[x|x = x])$ .  $\square$

For (7b), take any  $x$ . Let us first consider the case where  $\exists y(y \not\leq x)$ .<sup>11</sup> In this case, from PM4, we have the complement of  $x$ ,  $\bar{x}$ . From (7a),  $\bar{x} \leq \text{lub}[x|x = x]$ . Since  $\forall x(x \leq y \mapsto \bar{y} \leq \bar{x})$  and  $\forall x(x = \bar{\bar{x}})$  (Weber and Contoir, 2015, p. 1282),  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} \leq x$  holds. Second consider the case where  $\neg\exists y(y \not\leq x)$ . This is equivalent to  $\forall y(y \leq x)$ ,

<sup>11</sup>Here we appeal to argument by cases, which is valid in DKQ. See Weber and Cotnoir (2015) p. 1289.

thus it immediately follows that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq x$ . In both cases,  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq x$  holds. Therefore we have (7c).  $\square$

(7c) is shown as follows. Take any  $x$ . Suppose that  $x \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Since  $\forall x(x \leq y \mapsto \bar{y} \leq \bar{x})$  and  $\forall x(x = \bar{x})$ ,  $lub[x|x=x] \leq \bar{x}$ . From (7a),  $\bar{x} \leq lub[x|x=x]$ . From PM2, we have  $\bar{x} = lub[x|x=x]$ . Let us call this (i). Again since  $\forall x(x = \bar{x})$ ,  $x = \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  holds. Call this (ii). From (i) and (7a),  $x \leq \bar{x}$ . From this and PM7, we have  $\forall z(z \bullet x \rightarrow z \bullet \bar{x})$ . Therefore  $x \bullet x \rightarrow x \bullet \bar{x}$ . Since  $\forall x(\neg x \bullet \bar{x})$  (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1281),  $\neg x \bullet x$ , that is,  $\forall y(y \not\leq x \vee y \not\leq \bar{x})$  (note that  $\rightarrow$  is contrapositive). Therefore we have  $x \not\leq x \vee x \not\leq \bar{x}$ , and thus  $x \not\leq x$ . From this and (ii), we have  $x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Now  $x \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]} \vdash x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  holds. From this  $x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  follows (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1289). Therefore  $\forall x(x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]})$ .  $\square$

(7d), that is,  $\forall x(x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]} \vee x \not\leq lub[x|x=x])$ , immediately follows from (7c).  $\square$

**proof of (8)** (8a) immediately follows from (\*) which delivers  $\exists x(x \not\leq lub[x|x=x])$ .  $\square$

For (8b). From (7c), it follows that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . This entails that  $\exists x(\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \not\leq x)$  which is equivalent to (8b).  $\square$

For (8c). PM1 entails that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ , and thus  $\exists x(x \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]})$ , which is equivalent to (8c).  $\square$

(8d), that is,  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \bullet lub[x|x=x]$ . follows from (7a) and that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ .  $\square$

**proof of (9)** (9a) immediately follows from PM1 and PM2.  $\square$

(9b) immediately follows from (7c) and PM2.  $\square$

## 4.7 Appendix 3: Nontriviality of $PM+(\ast)$

Someone could worry that  $PM+(\ast)$ , exactly in virtue of the fact that they are contradictory, fall into logical triviality. In this Appendix, we will present a model which shows that this is not the case. To show that  $PM+(\ast)$  is not trivial, we adopt the same strategy as in the proof of non-triviality of PM presented in Appendix 2 of Weber and Cotnoir (2015). In particular, our proofs use the fact that DKQ is sound with respect to the

standard three valued semantics of the paraconsistent logic RM3. The set of values of RM3 is  $\{t, f, b\}$ :  $t$  is true,  $f$  is false and  $b$  is both true and false.  $t$  and  $b$  are its designated values. The truth functions for connectives are defined as follows.

	$\neg$	$\wedge$	t	b	f	$\vee$	t	b	f	$\rightarrow$	t	b	f
t	$f$	t	$t$	$b$	$f$	t	$t$	$t$	$t$	t	$t$	$f$	$f$
b	$b$	b	$b$	$b$	$f$	b	$t$	$b$	$b$	b	$t$	$b$	$f$
f	$t$	f	$f$	$f$	$f$	f	$t$	$b$	$f$	f	$t$	$t$	$t$

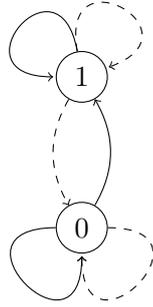
Given the fact and semantics of RM3, to prove non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$ , it is enough to show that all the axioms of  $PM+(\ast)$  take either the value  $t$  or the value  $b$  in some RM3 interpretations for them, and that  $PM+(\ast)$  have at least one formula which takes the value  $f$  there.

Before showing the non-triviality of our theory, let us make a general remark on the treatment of quantifiers: If the domain is finite, universal quantifiers can be treated as conjunctions and particular quantifiers will be treated as disjunctions (see Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p.1291). In particular, in cases where the domain consists of 1 and 0 (as is in our models defined below),  $\exists x(\phi x)$  takes the same value as  $\phi(1) \vee \phi(0)$ ; and  $\forall x(\phi x)$  takes the same value as  $\phi(1) \wedge \phi(0)$ . Given the truth function for  $\vee$ , to prove that  $\exists x(\phi x)$  is designated, it is enough to show that either  $\phi(1)$  or  $\phi(0)$  is designated. In the same way, to prove that  $\forall x(\phi)$  is designated, it is enough to show that both  $\phi(1)$  and  $\phi(0)$  are designated.

Let's start discussing the non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$ . To show this, we use exactly the same model as one in the proof of non-triviality for PM given by Weber and Cotnoir (2015) in Appendix 2. Let's call this model  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$ .  $M_{PM+(\ast)} = \langle D, V \rangle$  is defined as follows: the domain of interpretation  $D$  is  $\{0, 1\}$ .  $V(\leq)$  and  $V(=)$  are as described in table (b) and table (c).

The truth table (b) describes the behavior of parthood. For instance,  $V(1 \leq 1) = V(0 \leq 0) = b$ ,<sup>12</sup> which means that 1 is part of itself and 1 is not part of itself, and 0 is part of itself and 0 is not part of itself;  $V(1 \leq 0) = f$ , which means that 1 is not part of 0. The truth table (c) describes the behavior of identity. For instance,  $V(0 = 1) = V(1 = 0) = f$ , which means that 0 and 1 are not identical. The graph (a) represents  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$  visually: 0 and 1 are the elements of the model, the solid arrow indicates what is part of what:

<sup>12</sup>For simplicity, we use '0' and '1' as terms in the theory for 0 and 1 respectively.



(a)

$\leq$	0	1
0	$b$	$t$
1	$f$	$b$

(b)

$=$	0	1
0	$b$	$f$
1	$f$	$b$

(c)

$x \rightarrow y$  means  $x$  is part of  $y$ . The dashed arrow indicates what is not part of what:  $x \dashrightarrow y$  means  $x$  is not part of  $y$ . For instance, looking at the graph, it is easy to see that, in  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$ , 0 is part of itself (represented by a solid arrow from 0 to 0) and 0 is not part of itself (represented by a dashed arrow from 0 to 0).

Let's now show the non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$  using  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$ . Recall that the axiomatic system proposed by Weber and Cotnoir, namely  $PM$ , has exactly the same axioms of  $PM+(\ast)$  with the exception of  $(\ast)$ . Since Weber and Cotnoir have already shown that all axioms of  $PM$  are designated in their model and since their model is the same one used here, in order to show the non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$ , it is enough to check that  $(\ast)$ , which is repeated below, is designated.

$$(\ast) \exists x \exists y (x \not\leq y \wedge lub(y, z = z))$$

Now, the proof goes as follows. Since the domain is the finite set  $\{0, 1\}$ ,  $(\ast)$  takes the same value as the disjunction  $(1 \not\leq 1 \wedge lub(1, z = z)) \vee (1 \not\leq 0 \wedge lub(0, z = z)) \vee (0 \not\leq 1 \wedge lub(1, z = z)) \vee (0 \not\leq 0 \wedge lub(0, z = z))$ . Given the truth function for  $\vee$ , if one of these disjuncts is designated, then the whole disjunction, and thus  $(\ast)$ , is designated. Here we show that the first disjunct,  $1 \not\leq 1 \wedge lub(1, z = z)$  takes the value  $b$ . The first conjunct of this takes  $b$  (this is obvious from the model). The second conjunct,  $lub(1, z = z)$ , takes value  $b$ , which is shown as follows. Given the definition of  $lub$ ,  $lub(1, z = z)$  is rephrased as  $\forall y (y = y \mapsto y \leq 1) \wedge \forall z (\forall y (y = y \mapsto y \leq z) \mapsto 1 \leq z)$ . Let's start considering  $\forall y (y = y \mapsto y \leq 1)$ . Since the enthymematic conditional is defined as  $A \mapsto B =_{df} A \wedge t \rightarrow B$ ,

$\forall y(y = y \mapsto y \leq 1)$  is rephrased as  $\forall y(y = y \wedge t \rightarrow y \leq 1)$ . Now, we consider all the possible values of  $y$  as follows:

- $V(1 = 1 \wedge t \rightarrow 1 \leq 1) = b$
- $V(0 = 0 \wedge t \rightarrow 0 \leq 1) = t$

Since universal quantifier is treated as conjunction, this means that

$$V(\forall y(y = y \wedge t \rightarrow y \leq 1)) = b \quad (4.1)$$

Let's continue by examining  $\forall y(\forall z(z = z \mapsto z \leq y) \mapsto 1 \leq y)$ . This is rephrased as  $\forall y(((\forall z(z = z \wedge t) \rightarrow z \leq y) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq y)$ . (4.2) considers all the possible values of  $z$  with  $y$  having value 1, and (4.3) considers all the possible values of  $z$  with  $y$  having value 0.

$$V((((1 = 1 \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 1) \wedge ((0 = 0 \wedge t) \rightarrow 0 \leq 1) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 1) = b \quad (4.2)$$

$$V((((1 = 1 \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 0) \wedge ((0 = 0 \wedge t) \rightarrow 0 \leq 0) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 0) = t \quad (4.3)$$

Since universal quantifier is treated as conjunction, this means that

$$V(\forall y((((\forall z(z = z \wedge t) \rightarrow z \leq y) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq y))) = b \quad (4.4)$$

(4.1) and (4.4) show that  $\text{lub}(1, z = z)$  takes value  $b$ . Since  $1 \leq 1$  takes value  $b$ ,  $1 \leq 1 \wedge \text{lub}(1, z = z)$  takes value  $b$ . Therefore,  $(\ast)$  is designated.

The last step to show that  $PM+(\ast)$  is not trivial consists in showing that there is at least one formula which takes value  $f$ , which is already done by Weber and Cotnoir (2015). However, it is worthwhile here to add one example of invalid formula in  $PM+(\ast)$ , that is  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$ . Indeed,  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$  takes  $f$  and thus it is not a theorem of  $PM+(\ast)$ . It is easy to see this. First,  $\text{lub}(1, x \neq x)$ ,  $\text{lub}(1, x = x)$ ,  $\text{lub}(0, x \Downarrow 1)$  are designated and, thus,  $\text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$  is 1 and  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]}$  is 0. Moreover,  $0 = 1$  takes  $f$ . Therefore,  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$  takes value  $f$ .

**One last quick remark.** From this non-triviality proof, it is easy to see that  $PM+(\ast)$  does not accommodate Priest's intuition according to which nothingness is the mereological sum of what is not self-identical. Indeed, as we have shown, in  $PM+(\ast)$ , it is not

the case that the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals is identical to the complement of the least upper bound of the self-identicals (that is, in our model, nothingness). However,  $PM+(*)$  can include Priest's idea with the addition of a new axiom. This axiom, call it  $(**)$ , is the following one:  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} = lub[x|x \neq x]$ . We call  $PM+(*)$  with the addition of  $(**)$ ,  $PM+(*)+(**)$ . As in the case of  $PM+(*)$ , it is possible to show the non triviality of  $PM+(*)+(**)$ . In what follows, we will simply sketch the model according to which  $PM+(*)+(**)$  is not trivial. Call this model  $M_{PM+(*)+(**)}$ .  $M_{PM+(*)+(**)} = \langle D, V \rangle$  is defined as follows: the domain of interpretation  $D$  is  $\{0, 1\}$ .  $V(\leq)$  and  $V(=)$  are as described in table (b) and table (c).

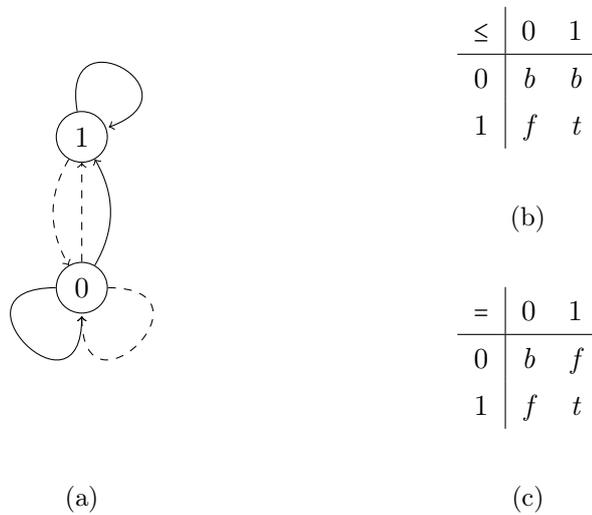


Figure 4.2

The truth table (b) describes the behavior of parthood: for instance,  $V(0 \leq 0) = b$ , which means that 0 is part of itself and 0 is not part of itself.  $V(1 \leq 0) = f$ , which means that 1 is not part of 0. The truth table (c) describes the behavior of identity: for instance,  $V(0 = 1) = V(1 = 0) = f$ , which means that 0 is not identical to 1 and 1 is not identical to 0. The graph (a) represents  $M_{PM+(*)+(**)}$  visually: as in the graph used for  $M_{PM+(*)}$ , 0 and 1 are the elements of the model, the solid arrow indicates what is part of what:  $x \rightarrow y$  means  $x$  is part of  $y$ . The dashed arrow indicates what is not part of what:  $x \dashrightarrow y$  means  $x$  is not part of  $y$ . For instance, looking at the graph, it is easy to see that, in  $M_{PM+(*)+(**)}$ , 0 is part of 1 (represented by a solid arrow from 0 to 1) and, at the same time, 0 is not part of 1 (represented by a dashed arrow from 0 to 1).

Now, due to the large amount of calculations, we will not go through all the necessary steps: calculations are left to the readers. However, given  $M_{PM+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)}$ , all the axioms of  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$  hold. Moreover,  $(\ast\ast)$  holds as well because the least upper bound of the self-identicals takes value 1 and the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals takes value 0. Since the complement of the least upper bound of the self-identical takes value 0 as well, this means that the least upper bound of the non-self-identical (Priest's nothingness) and the complement of the least upper bound of the self-identicals (Heidegger's nothingness) are identical. In this sense, Priest's intuition can be incorporated in the mereological system presented in this chapter.



## Chapter 5

# *Grundsein*

**Overview.** As we have already discussed in the first chapter, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Moreover, all entities are in virtue of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities because it makes all entities entities. In this fourth and final chapter, we try to develop a grounding theory that explains how **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** can ground everything that is. Since, according to Heidegger's *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has inconsistent features (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity), the grounding theory presented here has inconsistent features as well.

**Structure.** In **Section 4.1**, we introduce Heidegger's concept of ground and we focus our attention on the *ontological* ground, as it is understood before the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>. In **Section 4.2**, we present Heidegger's idea according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of every entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is itself ungrounded. We also discuss its relation with the Principle of Sufficient Reasons (PSR), and we describe its structural properties. Finally, we show that these structural properties are the same ones that characterize a particularly strong form of *foundationalism*. In **Section 4.3** and **Section 4.4**, we consider *ontological* ground as it is understood after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>. We show how Heidegger's foundationalism should be revised in order to do justice to the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Thus, we introduce two forms of para-foundationalism, which is an inconsistent version of foundationalism. In **Section 4.5**, using para-foundationalism, we try to give an interpretation of one of the most obscure concepts of the so-called late Heidegger, namely the *last God*. Finally, in **Section 4.6**, we propose two formal models that show how, working in a paraconsistent setting, para-foundationalism does not lead to logical triviality.

## 5.1 Being<sub>MET</sub>: the ontological ground

During the last months of 1928, while Heidegger was writing his well known lecture entitled *What is metaphysics?*, another manuscript was sitting on his desk. Its title was *On the essence of Ground*. Heidegger was aware that, even though the notion of ground was “bound up with [so many] central questions of metaphysics” (Heidegger, 1998, p.81), its meaning [*Sinn*\*] was never properly understood. So, this second essay was meant to answer the following question: what does ground [*Grund*\*] mean?

Heidegger proposes two complementary characterizations of the notion of ground. On the one hand, appealing to Aristotle, he takes it to be “the first” thing or the “beginning” on which what is grounded *depends*: these expressions seem to suggest that there is a hierarchical structure of elements in which the primary ones behave as basis for the secondary ones. In this sense, the ground is the “cause” which metaphysically and logically determines what is grounded in it (cf. Bliss and Priest, forthcoming; cf. Corkum, 2013). On the other hand, appealing to Leibniz, Heidegger takes ground to be the “reason” for something to be how and what it is: something obtains *because of* its ground or something holds *in virtue of* its ground.

According to Heidegger, grounding is not unitary; there is no single dependence relation in play. Indeed, he discusses three examples of different kinds of grounding: the first two types of ground are concerned with the reason why some entities are the entities that they are (for instance, in Heidegger’s jargon, why some entities are pieces of *equipment*) while the last one is concerned with the reason why all entities simply *are*. In other terms, the first two types are about the *ontic* ground (a ground which exclusively deals with specific kinds of entities) while the last one is about the *ontological* ground (a ground which deals only with entities as entities). Since, in what follows, we will focus on the latter kind of ground, let’s describe it in more detail.

The ontological ground, namely what Heidegger labels as the *ground of something*, is “the primary” one (Heidegger, 1967, p.125) because it is not concerned with one specific kind of entity but with entities in general. According to Heidegger, everything we can refer to (everything we can think about, speak about or reason about) is an entity. “Such grounding of things lies ‘at the ground’ of all comportment toward beings, and in such a way that (...) beings become manifest in themselves (as the beings they are)” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125). “[Such grounding] makes possible the manifestation of beings in

themselves” (Heidegger, 1967, p.124). Exactly the entities manifested in themselves are grounded in the ontological ground - namely entities simply as entities, as things that *are*. For instance, since we can think about a hammer, a number, the redness of the rose, the idea of the infinite, and even God, they are all entities and, as such, they are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or, according to the second Heidegger, in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), which makes them be. According to Heidegger, the ontological ground is exactly the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) of all entities that are. It also follows that, “grounding something means making possible the *why-question* in general. (...) Why is this in this way and not otherwise? Why this and not that? *Why something at all and not nothing?*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125). We can ask why a number (which is an entity) has this property or that property, only because there is a number (an entity) in the first place, and there is a number (an entity) in the first place if and only if the ontological ground makes that number an entity. We can worry why there is something (the hammer, the redness of the rose, the idea of the infinite) and not nothing, exactly because there is something and not nothing at all. However, there is something if and only if something is grounded in a ground which makes that something something. In other words, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is ‘the reason’ why any entity is an entity. In order to ask something about entities, entities are needed. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is needed as well because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) makes entities entities. Since the ontological ground is the ground *in virtue of* which entities are entities and since, according to Heidegger, what makes entities entities is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), then the ground *in virtue of* which entities are entities is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) itself. Entities are *because of* **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) grounds entities. The ground, understood as the ontological ground, is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) itself.

As Heidegger points out, this kind of ground is metaphysically more fundamental than all the others. Indeed, the ontic grounds are the reason why a specific kind of entity (namely a piece of equipment) is that specific kind of entity, while the ontological ground is the reason for any entity to simply be an entity. It is the reason why everything *is*. For instance, according to Heidegger’s phenomenology, a piece of equipment is grounded in the fact that it can be used to pursue specific tasks or to plan future activities; however, in order to be something that can be used to engage in present or future activities, it needs to be an entity. More generally, it needs *to be*. It needs to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Being<sub>MET</sub>**). The ground, understood as the ontological ground, is more

radical than all the other kinds of ground because it is metaphysically prior: it is the *conditio sine qua non* for anything else. According to the ontology presented in *Being and Time* (1927), any piece of equipment, in order to be a piece of equipment, is grounded in the possibility of being used by *Dasein*\* (by a human being); however, in order to be grounded in the possibility of being used, it has to be an entity and, in order to be an entity, it has to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). The fact that, for example, a hammer is a piece of equipment is primarily grounded in the fact that a hammer is an entity. Without being grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), a hammer, as any other piece of equipment, cannot be that specific entity, which is a piece of equipment. In this sense, any *ontic truth* (namely, any truth concerning entities) is primarily grounded in an *ontological truth* (namely, a truth concerning what makes any entity an entity). Heidegger: “Yet because such grounding of something prevails from the outset throughout all becoming-manifest of beings [ontic truth], all ontic discovery and disclosing must in its way be a *grounding of something* [ontological truth]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125).

In the secondary literature, Heidegger’s discussion about the ontological ground is often interpreted as the mystical element of his philosophy. The ontological ground, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), is not something we can logically think about or rationally discuss – it has to be perceived, experienced without turning it into the subject matter of philosophy. As Caputo claims, “Heidegger’s grounding is without a why; it is the renunciation of concepts and representations, of propositions and ratiocinations about Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Caputo, 1986, p191). In what follows, we give an alternative interpretation revealing the philosophical argument that can rationally do justice to Heidegger’s understudying of the ontological ground. In **Section 4.2**, we discuss Heidegger’s account of grounding before the *Kehre*\* and, thus, as we have already explained in chapter 1, we are concerned with **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. From **Section 4.3** to the end of the present chapter, we discuss how Heidegger should revise his grounding theory according to the dialethic solution to the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** presented in chapter 1. Thus, we are concerned with **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

## 5.2 **Being<sub>MET</sub>**: foundationalism

As we have already discussed above, the ontological ground constitutes the relation between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and all entities. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** determines entities as enti-

ties, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** ontologically grounds all entities. If something is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is not an entity. More explicitly, this metaphysical dependence relation between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and all entities can be spelled out in the following way:

*(Gr)*:  $x$  grounds  $y$  if and only if  $x$  makes  $y$  an entity.

However, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes all entities entities and since nothing else makes all entities entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the only ground for all entities as such. The foundational element that makes all entities entities (namely being itself) is unique. Therefore, *(Gr)* can be reformulated as:

*(Gr')*:  $b$  grounds  $y$  if and only if  $b$  makes  $y$  an entity.

where  $b$  is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and  $y$  can be any entity. Nevertheless, as we have already discussed, Heidegger not only holds the belief that any entity is an entity *in virtue of Being<sub>MET</sub>*, he also thinks that, according to the so-called *ontological difference* [*ontologische Differenz*], **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is not an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, exactly because of this, Heidegger claims that the ground, understood as the ontological ground, is transcendental. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground on which all entities are grounded. Because of the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is transcendental in the sense that it is beyond entities – beyond the world (namely the totality of entities). So, if **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is transcendental, the ground of all entities is transcendental. Heidegger: “Ground belongs to the essence of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] and being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] (not beings!) is given only in transcendence” (Heidegger, 1967, p.128). Thus, “such grounding prevails transcendently from the outset throughout all becoming-manifest of beings” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125).

From these observations, two important consequences follow. First of all, given *(Gr')* and the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded. If every entity, in order to be an entity, needs to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is neither grounded in something other than **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself nor is it self-grounded; otherwise it would be an entity. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is simply un-

grounded.<sup>1</sup> In Heidegger’s jargon, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the “abyssal ground” (Heidegger, 1967, p.130). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the “abyss of the ground” (Heidegger, 1967, p.130) because, since *being grounded* means *being an entity*, and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded. Nevertheless, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds everything else. In a footnote of *On the essence of ground*, this idea is clearly stated: “Where does the necessity lie for grounding? In the *abyss of*, in the *non-ground*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.83). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** lies on the abyss because it is the non-ground: it does not have a foundation. Metaphorically, there is no thing (no ground) that supports (grounds) **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words: “Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is intrinsically ground-like, what gives ground, presences as the ground, has the character of ground. [However,] the ground-like is groundless; what grounds does not need any ground” (Heidegger, 1936, p. 170). Because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, “being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is the rejection of the rule of such grounding; it renounces all grounding. It is abyssal (ab-grounding)” (Heidegger, 1985, p. 170).

The second consequence is that the so-called Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) does not unrestrictedly hold. Heidegger takes (PSR) to be that “fundamental principle [*Grundsatz*]” according to which “nothing is without reason (*nihil est sine ratione*)” (Heidegger, 1967, p.83) or, transcribing it positively, “every entity has a reason (*omne ens habet rationem*)” (Heidegger, 1967, p.83). Moreover, Heidegger thinks that *having a reason* means *being in virtue of something*, *being because of something* or, more generally, *being grounded in something*. From this point of view, the fundamental principle [*Grundsatz*] is a principle about what is fundamental [*Der Satz von Grund*]. “The fundamental principle is a principle about the ground [*Der Satz von Grund ist ein Grundsatz*]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.83). If this is the case, (PSR) can be also read as “nothing is without a ground” or “everything is with a ground”. Now, having said so, it is easy to see why Heidegger’s metaphysics leads to a constrained version of (PSR). Indeed, since every entity

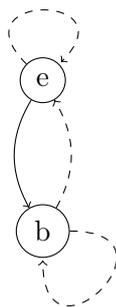
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<sup>1</sup>Following McDaniel (2015) and Priest (2015), someone may object that, in Heidegger, it is not the case that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** always depends on entities. As Heidegger himself writes: “if we think of the matter just a bit more rigorously, (...) we see that Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] means always and everywhere: *the Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of beings*” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.61). However, the kind of dependence or grounding relation in place here cannot be the dependence or grounding relation discussed in this chapter. Indeed, (*Gr*) is only that kind of (ontological) dependence or grounding relation that makes all entities entities. Since, from the beginning to the end of his philosophical trajectory, Heidegger always endorsed the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is *not* an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be grounded (in the sense of (*Gr*)) in entities. If it is the case that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** depends on entities, such dependence relation is not a (*Gr*) one.

is grounded in **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, every entity has a reason to be something (and not nothing). However, since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not an entity, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is ungrounded. This means that it is not true that everything has a reason (understood as ground) and, consequently, it is not the case that (PSR) holds unrestrictedly. Indeed, according to Heidegger himself, every entity has a reason but not **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is ungrounded, “the principle of [sufficient] reason (or ground) is valid for *beings* [entities]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.128). (PSR) holds for entities but not for **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Everything is grounded in **Being**<sub>MET</sub> (which is why every entity has a reason to be) but **Being**<sub>MET</sub> remains the ‘groundless ground’ of everything that is (cf. Braver, 2013).

Even though, given the contemporary analytic debate, the position described until now may seem weird and obscure, it could be easily categorized as a kind of foundationalism. Following Bliss and Priest (forthcoming), we take foundationalism to be the view according to which everything grounds out in *foundational elements*. An element is a foundational one (let’s call it *FE* $x$ ) if there is no  $y$  on which  $x$  depends, other than perhaps itself. Such an elements can be formally described in the following way:  $\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset x = y)$ . We read  $x \rightarrow y$  as  $x$  depends on  $y$  (and not as a connective, as we did in Chapter 3!). Since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> behaves as a *foundational element* because there is no element on which **Being**<sub>MET</sub> depends, Heidegger’s metaphysics is a foundationalist one. However, Heidegger also endorses a particularly strong form of foundationalism in which there is only one *foundational element*, which is **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, and everything depends upon this unique *fundamentalium*. Taking  $b$  as **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, we can formally express this thought in the following way:  $\exists b(FEb \wedge \forall y(y \neq b \supset y \rightarrow b))$ . On the one hand, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is unique because there is only one **Being**<sub>MET</sub> which grounds all entities. On the other hand, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not grounded in anything else and is not self-grounded either; otherwise it would be an entity.

It is also possible to precisely describe Heidegger’s foundationalism appealing to its structural properties. For simplicity, let’s consider the following graph, which describes the grounding relation between **Being**<sub>MET</sub> (represented by the node labeled  $b$ ) and one entity only (represented by the node labeled  $e$ ). The solid arrows indicate what depends on what, while the dashed arrows indicate where there is no dependence relation.



As we can see from the graph, entity  $e$  depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but it does not depend on itself. Moreover, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$  and it does not depend on itself either. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything at all. From this simplified picture, the structural properties of Heidegger's foundationalism should be clear.<sup>2</sup> First of all, Heidegger's foundationalism endorses *anti-reflexivity* or **[AR]**, according to which nothing depends on itself. Formally, this structural property is expressed in the following way:

**[AR]**:  $\forall x \neg x \rightarrow x$ .

Since neither entity  $e$  nor **Being<sub>MET</sub>** depend on themselves, nothing depends on itself. More generally, since every entity depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and only on **Being<sub>MET</sub>**!), and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything (not even on itself), nothing depends on itself. Secondly, it endorses *anti-symmetry* or **[AS]**, according to which no things depend on each other. Formally, it is expressed as:

**[AS]**:  $\forall x \forall y (x \rightarrow y \supset \neg y \rightarrow x)$ .

Once again, consider the graph. Entity  $e$  depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$ . Since there are only two elements and since neither of them depend on each other, nothing depends on each other. Of course, **[AS]** does not rule out the possibility that something depends on itself because, as the formula shows,  $x$  could be  $y$ . Nevertheless, according to the graph presented above, this is not the case. Since

<sup>2</sup>The structural properties discussed and used in this chapter are introduced by Bliss and Priest in their *Metaphysical Dependence, East and West* (forthcoming).

[AR] holds, no things depend on each other, not even on themselves. More generally, let's recall that, in Heidegger's metaphysics, we deal with entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** only. Entities depend on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in order to be entities, but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entities. Moreover, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything, it does not depend on itself either. Thus, no things depend on each other. Finally, Heidegger's foundationalism endorses the negation of *extendability* or [-E], according to which something does not depend on anything. Formally,

[-E]:  $\exists x \forall y (x \rightarrow y \supset x = y)$ .

As we can easily see looking at the graph, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$  and it does not depend on itself either. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything. According to Heidegger, there is an element that does not depend on anything; this element is **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. It does not depend on anything because, since everything that depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not even depend on itself. Once again, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ungrounded ground or the groundless ground. Using a poetic expression borrowed from Angelus Silesius' *Cherubinic Wanderer*, Heidegger claims that: "The rose is without a *wherefor* [*warum*] - it blooms because it blooms" (Angelus Silesius, 1989, p.23). Asking for the ultimate reason of the rose is useless because there is no ultimate reason for its blooming. Of course, the rose has some reasons to be what the rose actually is; however, the rose, as all the other entities, is without an ultimate reason. Its reason, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, does not have any reason. Since all entities are in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not in virtue of anything, all entities are not in virtue of anything either. This does not mean that entities do not have any ground *at all*. It simply means that all entities rest on a ground which is ungrounded. The ground on which every entity relies is, indeed, an abyss. The rose, as with all the rest, is ultimately groundless.

### 5.3 Beyng<sub>MET</sub>: para-foundationalism 1.0

At this point, the problem discussed in chapter 1 emerges again. The issue in question does not directly concern the foundationalist thesis according to which the rose, with all the other entities, is grounded in an ungrounded *fundamentalium*; on the contrary, it is

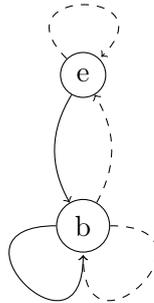
about the *fundamentalium* itself. The problem concerns **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and it is easy to see why.

As we know, Heidegger's metaphysics works under two main assumptions. First of all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Secondly, an entity is whatever we can refer to. It follows that it should be impossible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**; otherwise **Being<sub>MET</sub>** would be an entity. Nevertheless, we did refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** describing it as *such and such*. For instance, we have argued in favor of the idea that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ungrounded ground of every entity. However, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity at all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be the ungrounded ground either. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be neither thought nor spoken. The price paid for doing so is that, referring to it, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself would be turned into exactly what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not, namely an entity. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ineffable: whatever is the grounding structure which has **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as a *foundational element*, nothing can be said about it. **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the ground, cannot be discussed, argued for or discovered. "The essence of ground cannot even be sought [or] let alone found" (Heidegger, 1967, p.127).

The situation is even more complicated than this, though. Indeed, not only do the two assumptions endorsed by Heidegger lead to the ineffability of the ground, but they also lead to an aporia. This is actually the case because, exactly in saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ineffable, we say something about it. In other terms, exactly in saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity because we refer to it. Heidegger's assumptions imply that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity – a contradiction. According to the interpretation presented in chapter 1, the late Heidegger (namely the Heidegger after the *Kehre*\*) accepts such a contradiction endorsing the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. As we have already explained, in order to distinguish between the consistent and the inconsistent account of the fundamental element, Heidegger calls the latter one '**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**'. More specifically, Heidegger's *Ereignis*\* (the Event) is exactly the realization that the "[**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is affected by the lack of beyng [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] but, nevertheless, *is*" (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). This is also the reason why the late Heidegger claims that "the contradiction is essentially a fundamental proposition about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and its truth" (Heidegger, 1998b, p.13). At this point a question becomes relevant: how does the position of Heidegger after the *Kehre*\* affect his account of grounding?

It is natural to think that the switch from a consistent account of the *foundational*

*element* (call it **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) to an inconsistent account of the *foundational element* (call it **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) would imply a switch from a consistent account of grounding to an inconsistent account of grounding. And this is what happens. Let's recall that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. As we have already seen, from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, it follows that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is ungrounded. From the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, it follows that, in virtue of its *being an entity*, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** needs to be grounded. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ontological ground that makes every entity an entity, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds itself. Thus, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and, at the same time, it does not depend on anything. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded and ungrounded at the same time. This is shown in the following graph:



Once again, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is represented by the node labeled *e* and the entity grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is represented by the node labeled *b*. The solid arrows indicate what depends on what, while the dashed arrows indicate where there is no dependence relation. As we can see, entity *e* depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and it does not depend on itself. Moreover, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity *e* but it both depends and not on itself.

Now, let's have a look at the structural properties that this new inconsistent grounding structure has. From the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, everything previously stated still holds. Since all entities depend on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything (not even on itself), nothing depends on itself. Therefore, [AR] holds. Since all entities depend on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and only on **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** neither depends on all entities nor depends on itself, no things depend mutually on each other. Therefore, [AS] holds. Finally, from the fact that all entities depend on

**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything else, it follows that something does not depend on anything else. Therefore, **[¬E]** holds. However, in contrast with the dependence relation grounded in the consistent *foundational element* (**Being<sub>MET</sub>**), this new approach has more structural properties than the ones described until now. Indeed, given the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well, two other structural properties hold. First of all, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is (also) an entity and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the only *foundational element* that makes all entities entities, something depends on itself, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** makes itself an entity. The structural property according to which something depends on itself is the negation of the *anti-reflexivity* property (**[¬AR]**) and it is formalized in the following way:

$$\mathbf{[¬AR]}: \exists x x \rightarrow x$$

Secondly, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is (also) an entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the only *foundational element* which makes all entities entities, the negation of **[AS]** holds as well. We formally describe this as:

$$\mathbf{[¬AS]}: \exists x \exists y (x \rightarrow y \wedge y \rightarrow x).$$

Strictly speaking, **[¬AS]** says that some things depend on each other, without ruling out the possibility that some things depend on themselves. Now, **[¬AS]** would be incompatible with the fact that there are things depending on themselves if and only if **[AR]** holds. However, this is not the case with Heidegger because, as we have seen, according to him, both **[AR]** and **[¬AR]** hold. Therefore, **[¬AS]** holds because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does depend on itself: it is self-grounded. At this point, it is easy to see why the inconsistency of the *foundational element* **Being<sub>MET</sub>** spreads to the structure of the grounding dependence. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, the grounding dependence relation has an inconsistent characterization as well: both **[AR]** and **[¬AR]**, and **[AS]** and **[¬AS]** hold.

On the one hand, **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s theory of grounding remains a foundationalist one, as in the case of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Since we follow Bliss and Priest (forthcoming) in defining foundationalism as the theory which includes *foundational elements* (*FEx*) and since

**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** behaves as a *foundational element*, this new account of grounding can be seen as a particularly extreme version of foundationalism. On the other hand, such a foundationalist approach is inconsistent because it has inconsistent structural properties: it endorses **[AR]** and its negation **[¬AR]**, and **[AS]** and its negation **[¬AS]**. We call this inconsistent form of foundationalism, *para-foundationalism*.

## 5.4 Beyng<sub>MET</sub>: para-foundationalist 2.0

Heidegger's foundationalist approach is very different from the para-foundationalist one: as we have seen, the former is a consistent theory and it uses a consistent *foundational element* (**Being<sub>MET</sub>**) while the latter is an inconsistent theory and it uses an inconsistent *foundational element* (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). However, these two grounding theories have something in common. Both of them take the *foundational element* (**Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) to be what determines entities as entities. Nevertheless, as we have already seen in both chapter 1 and chapter 2, in the very late period of Heidegger's philosophy, he starts to characterize the *foundational element* in a slightly different way, equating **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** with *being self-identical*. Let's recall that, in his *Identity and difference* (1957a), Heidegger claims that all entities are entities in virtue of the fact that "each entity is itself" (Heidegger, 1957a, p.28). Now, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (interpreted as *being self-identical*) still determines entities as entities because all entities are entities *in virtue of* the fact that they are exactly what they are. Any entity is that specific and unique entity that is: the reason for an entity to be an entity is its *being identical to itself*. However, if we work with this new understanding of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we have a new (and more extreme) form of para-foundationalism. Let's see why.

First of all, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** determines all entities as entities, and if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is *being self-identical*, since all entities are entities, all entities are self-identical. Secondly, according to the inconsistent account of the *foundational element*, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical and not. Moreover, because in Heidegger's metaphysics, everything is an entity *only*, with the exception of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (which is an entity and not), everything is self-identical *only* with the exception of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (which is self-identical and not). Now, given this framework, all the structural properties previously attributed to para-foundationalism hold. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities and, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is not an entity, it is ungrounded.

From here, **[AR]** holds. **[AS]** holds as well because, if all entities depend on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on any entity (not even on itself), no elements depend on each other. However, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and, thus, both **[¬AR]** and **[¬AS]** hold too. Finally, **[¬E]** holds because, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and it is ungrounded, something (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) does not depend on anything else. In other words, the negation of *Extendability* holds because, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded, it is not the case that everything depends on anything else. Indeed, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself does not.

Until here, everything is exactly the same as in the para-foundationalist case previously described. However, if we look carefully at the definition of **[E]**, we will see that, when **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood as a synonym of *being self-identical*, this structural property holds as well. So, consider **[E]**, which is defined in the following way:

**[E]**:  $\forall x \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$ .

Now, this structural property says that everything depends on something else. It is important to underline that, according to **[E]**, all entities depend on something which is not themselves (and this is guaranteed by the first conjunct of the formula, that is  $y \neq x$ ). Exactly for this reason, in both foundationalism and para-foundationalism, the negation of **[E]** holds. According to foundationalism, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is simply ungrounded and this means that it is not the case that everything depends on something else. Indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not. According to para-foundationalism, the negation of **[E]** holds because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both ungrounded and self-grounded. This means that it is still not the case that everything depends on something else. In other words, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything else (in virtue of its *being ungrounded*) and it depends on itself (in virtue of its *being self-grounded*). In both cases, the negation of **[E]** holds because there is something that does not depend on anything else, namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. However, the situation changes if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or what determines entities as entities) is interpreted as *being self-identical*. In this case, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is self-identical (because it is an entity) and not-self-identical (because it is not an entity). Now, on the one hand, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical, the negation of **[E]** holds; even though **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself, it is not true that everything depends on something else. On the other hand, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not self-identical as well, **[E]** holds. From the fact **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not

self-identical, it follows that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds something other than itself. In other words, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical (as in the case of Heidegger's foundationalism and the previous version of para-foundationalism), *extendability* does not hold because the first conjunct of the formula for **[E]** (namely  $y \neq x$ ) is not satisfied. On the contrary, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both self-identical and not self-identical (as discussed in the present Section), the first conjunct of the formula for **[E]** is both satisfied and not. Therefore, both **[E]** and **[¬E]** hold.

Let's sum up. On the one hand, when the *foundational element* (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is just characterized as what determines entities as entities, we have a form of para-foundationalism in which **[AR]** and its negation, and **[AS]** and its negation, hold. Moreover, **[E]** holds but not **[¬E]**. On the other hand, when the *foundational element* (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is understood as *being self-identical*, we have a particularly extreme form of para-foundationalism. Such a new form is stronger than the previous one for two main reasons. First of all, it has more inconsistent structural features: beside the features of the previous version of para-foundationalism, it has also the structural property **[E]** and its negation. Secondly, it is more radical than the previous form of para-foundationalism because it is inconsistent on that specific structural property, namely **[E]**, the negation of which was meant to characterize all forms of foundationalism.<sup>3</sup> This second form of para-foundationalism shows that all forms of foundationalism do not have **[E]**, even though, in some extreme forms, both **[E]** and its negation hold. Finally, from both forms of para-foundationalism also follows a new consideration about Heidegger's account of (PSR). In the case of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, Heidegger has correctly claimed that (PSR) cannot unrestrictedly hold. As we have seen, if we interpret the principle 'nothing is without a reason' as 'nothing is without a ground', there is, at least an element, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, for which (PSR) does not hold: indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is without any reason. However, according to both forms of para-foundationalism, this is not the case anymore. As we have seen, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is inconsistent, it is both ungrounded and self-grounded. On the one hand, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded, it is without any reason. Therefore, (PSR) fails. On the other hand, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded (or, more precisely, self-grounded), it has a reason (namely itself). Since all entities

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<sup>3</sup>This is true because if we have the structural property **[E]**, it follows that it is impossible to have *foundational elements*. Since foundationalism is characterized as the view according to which there are *foundational elements*, **[E]** is incompatible with foundationalism.

are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is both ungrounded and self-grounded, all entities have a reason in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has its reason in itself. Even though something (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) both has a reason and not, it is still true that everything has a reason. Therefore, (PSR) holds.

## 5.5 **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as *the last God*

Before concluding, it may be interesting to point out that the present discussion about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (with its entailed foundationalism) and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (with its entailed para-foundationalism) can help us to have some new insights into one of the most enigmatic figures of Heidegger's philosophy, that is *the last God*.

Very often, at least in the Western philosophical tradition, the ground of all entities (or the reason why human beings, trees, sun sets, stars, planets and everything else *are*) goes under the name of God. For instance, according to Aquinas, "God wills the existence of all things" (cf. Lovejoy, 2001, p.319) while, according to Leibniz, God is the Perfection Prior, which generates the world as a necessary logical consequence of his essential nature (cf. Lovejoy, 2001, p.319). Schelling believes that God is that eternal realization [*Realwerden*] or *Genesis* of the world (cf. Lovejoy, 2001, p.320) while Meister Eckhart (who highly influenced Heidegger) thinks that God is the ground [*Grund\**] of everything. Even though, in all these cases, God is thought of as the universal ground, Heidegger has never borrowed any term from theology. His conception of the universal ground always goes under the name of '**Being<sub>MET</sub>**' or '**Being<sub>MET</sub>**'. The reason for his divorce from the theological tradition is clearly explained in *Phenomenology and Theology* (1967). Since Heidegger holds the idea that the ground of every entity is not an entity itself, he thinks that God cannot be such a universal ground because, in the theological framework, God is treated as an entity, namely as something that *is*. God *is* what wills, generates or realizes every thing; god *is* the ground of all entities. Of course, God is not a normal entity among entities. For instance, God is eternal and normal entities are not. Even more simply, God is the ground of all entities while a normal entity (such as a table) is not. So, even though God is often conceptualized as a *super-ens*, God is still thought of as an *ens*. Since we refer to God, God is an entity, and this is why we can pray to *Yahweh*, we can make war in the name of *Christ*, and we can distinguish what is wrong from what is right following the commandments of *Allah*. We refer to

God because, in the first place, God is treated as an entity. Such an account of God is incompatible with the Heideggerian assumption that the ground of everything is not an entity and, from this, also follows the necessity of separating God (the *super-ens*) from **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), which is not an *ens*. Therefore, “**Being<sub>MET</sub>** [or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is not God” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.303). In Heidegger’s jargon, we could say that theology is ultimately an *onto*-theology, namely the study of the divine element as an entity. “Both ontology [the study of entities] and theology are ‘-logy’ [or sciences] because they are concerned with the attempt at explaining *entities*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.225). This is also the reason why Heidegger claims that theology is just like any other kind of science: it deals with God as an ‘object of study’ while the ground of all entities is not an object at all. Therefore, God is inappropriate as a characterization of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Having said that, the approach proposed by Heidegger in *Phenomenology and Theology* (1967) does not seem to hold for the whole trajectory of his philosophy. Indeed, in *Contributions to Philosophy* (1989a), Heidegger himself returns to theology accepting what he calls the *last God*. Unfortunately, he does not give any clear account of what the *last God* really is. On the one hand, we know that it is not simply “another God [*der Letzte Gott*]” because it is “different from both the old traditional Gods and the Christian God” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.394). The *last God* is characterized, using Hölderlin’s expression, as the “closest one” but, at the same time, “the most difficult to understand” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.396). On the other hand, we also know that the *last God* is tightly connected with the idea of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because “the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is the truth of the *last God*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.396). Since Heidegger never rejected his condemnation of theology, at this point, some questions look inevitable: how can Heidegger hold the position that ‘God’ cannot be another name to refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, believing, at the same time, that the *last God* is actually a synonym of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**? And, if so, what is the difference between the traditional account of God and the *last God*? These questions remain unanswered.

One possible way of making sense of the thoughts expressed in *Contributions to Philosophy* (1989a) is to appeal to para-foundationalism. The *last God* may be interpreted as the dialethic *foundational element* that we have called **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. If this is the case, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or the *last God*) is not an entity, Heidegger can still maintain his previous critique against theology. On the other hand, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also an

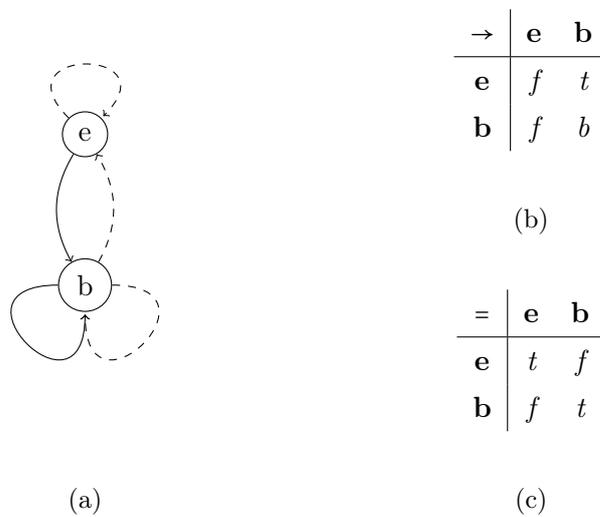
entity, it is actually possible to refer to it as God because, consistently with the theological tradition, God is that entity in virtue of which everything is. From this point of view, the *last God* is the “closest one” (Heidegger, 1989a, 396) because it is an entity and the world of human beings is constituted by entities. Entities are the things we are most familiar with. Nonetheless, the *last God* is also “the most difficult to understand” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.396) because it is not an entity as well and, as we have seen, what is not an entity leads to an aporia, which is accepted as true in the para-foundationalist view. So, “the closest proximity to the *last God* is the event of (...) its rejection” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.402). The *last God* is phenomenologically present when it is not or, more precisely, it is present when it is absent. It is present *and* it is not. On the one hand, it is present as all the other entities are: the *last God* is present to the mind of the people thinking or speculating about it and, thus, referring to it. On the other hand, the *last God* is *not* present as well: since it is not an entity and everything that is phenomenologically present is an entity, the *last God* cannot be phenomenologically present. So, if it is true that ‘only a God can save us’ (cf. Safranski, 1998), given Heidegger’s metaphysics, this God has to be the *last* one. It has to be the God that grounds everything including itself without being grounded at all.

## 5.6 Technical Appendix

Someone could worry that the two inconsistent theories of grounding, exactly in virtue of the fact that they are contradictory, fall into logical triviality. The following two models (one for each kind of para-foundationalism) show that this is not the case. These models are set up using a first-order interpretation for the paraconsistent logic *LP* (Priest, 1979). For a full and detailed description of this interpretation see Appendix 3 of chapter 3. In order to show that para-foundationalism 1.0 and para-foundationalism 2.0 are not trivial, we adopt the following strategy. First of all, we confirm that all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 and para-foundationalism 2.0 hold in the relative models. This means that these structural properties take either value **t** (true) or value **b** (both true and false). Secondly, we show that there is at least one sentence which takes value **f** (false).

Let’s start discussing the **model of para-foundationalism 1.0**. To define such a model  $M_{PF1.0} = \langle D, V \rangle$ , let the domain of interpretation  $D$  be  $\{e, b\}$ . As in the graphs

presented above,  $e$  represents an entity and  $b$  represents **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.  $V(\rightarrow)$  and  $V(=)$  are as described in table (b) and table (c). As we can see in the picture below, comparing the graph (a), which represents para-foundationalism 1.0, and table (b), entity  $e$  does not depend on itself ( $e \rightarrow e$  is false) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**  $b$  does not depend on entity  $e$  either ( $b \rightarrow e$  is false). However, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ( $e \rightarrow b$  is true) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** both depends and does not depend on itself ( $b \rightarrow b$  is both true and false). Moreover, as it is clear comparing the graph (a) and table (b), identity behaves in a consistent way. Thus, both entity  $e$  and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are self-identical ( $e = e$  and  $b = b$  are true) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not identical to entity  $e$  ( $b = e$  is false).



At this point, it is easy to show that, in our model, the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 (namely, **[AR]**, **[¬AR]**, **[AS]**, **[¬AS]**, **[¬E]**) hold, taking either value **t** or value **b**. Let's see. For *Anti-Reflexivity* (**[AR]**:  $\forall x \neg x \rightarrow x$ ), we consider all the possible values of  $x$ :

- $V\neg(e \rightarrow e) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V\neg(b \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{b}$

As it is clearly understandable looking at graph (a), it is true that entity  $e$  does not depend on itself and it is both true and false that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself. In all cases, **[AR]** holds. For the negation of *Anti-Reflexivity* (**[¬AR]**:  $\exists x(x \rightarrow x)$ ), it is enough to consider one value of  $x$  for which **[¬AR]** holds. As we have already noticed from graph (a), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and it does not depend on itself. Thus,  $V(b \rightarrow b)$  takes

value **b**. For *Anti-Symmetry* ([AS]:  $\forall x\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset \neg y \rightarrow x)$ ), we consider all the possible values of  $x$  and  $y$ :

- $V(e \rightarrow b \supset \neg b \rightarrow e) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(b \rightarrow e \supset \neg e \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(e \rightarrow e \supset \neg e \rightarrow e) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(b \rightarrow b \supset \neg b \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{b}$

The fact that *Anti-Symmetry* holds is intuitively understandable from graph (a) as well. First of all, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$ . Secondly, even considering the case where  $x$  is  $y$ , entity  $e$  does not depend on itself and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does and does not depend on itself. Thus, [AS] holds. For the negation of *Anti-Symmetry* ( $\neg$ AS]:  $\exists x\exists y(x \rightarrow y \wedge y \rightarrow x)$ ), it is enough to show that there is at least a value of  $x$  and a value of  $y$  for which  $\neg$ AS] takes value **t** or **b**. Now, as it is shown by graph (a), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and does not. Thus,  $V(b \rightarrow b \supset \neg b \rightarrow b)$  takes value **b**.  $\neg$ AS] holds as well. Finally, let's consider the last structural property of para-foundationalism 1.0. For the negation of *Extendability* ( $\neg$  E]:  $\exists x\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset x = y)$ ), we consider all the values of  $y$  and at least one value of  $x$  for which  $\neg$  E] takes either value **t** or value **b**:

- $V(b \rightarrow b \supset b = b) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(b \rightarrow e \supset b = e) = \mathbf{t}$

As we can see,  $\neg$  E] holds. Indeed, since the negation of *Extendability* claims that something does not depend on anything else, from graph (a) it is clear that, on the one hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends and does not depend on itself; on the other hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything else other than itself.

At this point we know that all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 hold. In order to show that the model presented here is not trivial, we need to show that there is a sentence which is false only. This is not difficult because, as we have already argued, we know that, in this first kind of para-foundationalism, *Extendability* [E] does not hold. Indeed, as graph (a) shows, it is false that everything depends on something else: for instance, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does and does not depend on itself. In both cases, it does

not depend on something else. Thus, in  $M_{PF1.0}$ ,  $\forall x \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$  is false because  $V(-b = b \wedge b \rightarrow b)$  takes value **f**.

Now, what about **a model of para-foundationalism 2.0**? This second model,  $M_{PF2.0}$ , is not very different than the one presented above and it is defined as  $\langle D, V \rangle$ . As in the previous case, the domain of interpretation  $D$  is  $\{e, b\}$  where  $e$  represents an entity and  $b$  represents **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** while  $V(\rightarrow)$  is as described in table (b). This is the case because para-foundationalism 2.0 has exactly the same features of para-foundationalism 1.0: in both cases, entity  $e$  does not depend on itself ( $e \rightarrow e$  is false) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**  $b$  does not depend on entity  $e$  either ( $b \rightarrow e$  is false). Moreover, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ( $e \rightarrow b$  is true) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** both depends and does not depend on itself ( $b \rightarrow b$  is both true and false). What is different is that, in para-foundationalism 1.0, both entity  $e$  and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are self-identical (as table (c) shows,  $e = e$  and  $b = b$  are true) while, in para-foundationalism 2.0, even though entity  $e$  is still self-identical ( $e = e$  still takes value **t**), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both self-identical and not ( $b = b$  takes value **b**). Thus, for para-foundationalism 2.0,  $V(=)$  is described by the following table:

$=$	<b>e</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>e</b>	<i>t</i>	<i>f</i>
<b>b</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>b</i>

At this point, as we have done before, we start checking if all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 2.0 (**[AR]**, **[-AR]**, **[AS]**, **[-AS]**, **[E]** and **[-E]**) hold, taking either value **t** or value **b**. This is not difficult because para-foundationalism 2.0 has exactly the same structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 plus **[E]**. This means that, since we already know that all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 hold, we only need to check *Extendability*.<sup>4</sup> According to *Extendability*, everything depends on something else. On the one hand, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. On the other hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** both depends and does not depend on itself. In this second case, it may seem that *Extendability* does not hold: indeed, in this model, either **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself. In both cases, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not

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<sup>4</sup>We need to check only *Extendability* because the only thing that changed from para-foundationalism 1.0 to para-foundationalism 2.0 is the behavior of identity. Since, beside *Extendability*, all the other structural properties (already verified in para-foundationalism 1.0) do not make use of identity, they are verified in para-foundationalism 2.0 too.

depend on anything else. However, we should not forget that, in para-foundationalism 2.0,  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  is not self-identical. This means that, when  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  depends on itself, because  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  is *also* not itself (because  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  is *also* not self-identical),  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  depends on something other than itself. This is reason why *Extendability* holds. Formally, for [E]:  $\forall x \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$ , we consider all the values of  $x$  and at least one value of  $y$  for which [E] takes either value  $\mathbf{t}$  or value  $\mathbf{b}$ :

- $V(-b = b \wedge b \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{b}$
- $V(-e = b \wedge e \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{t}$

As expected, [E] holds. To conclude, we show that, also in para-foundationalism 2.0, there is a sentence which is simply false. In this model, since entity  $e$  does not depend on itself, it must be false that everything depends on itself. Indeed, in  $M_{PF2.0}$ , the sentence  $\forall x x \rightarrow x$  is simply false because  $V(e \rightarrow e)$  takes value  $\mathbf{f}$ .

## Chapter 6

# Afterword

To conclude, let's summarize what we have done.

In the first chapter, we defended a new interpretation of the so-called second Heidegger, namely Heidegger after the *Kehre*. We introduced the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and we showed how thinking and talking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** leads to a paradox. Following Heidegger himself, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and everything we refer to is an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not: it is not an entity (because of the ontological difference) and it is an entity (because we refer to it in saying that being is not an entity). At this point, we endorsed the interpretation according to which Heidegger accepts the contradiction implied by **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as true. Finally, we showed that this dialethic interpretation of the second Heidegger also casts a new light on obscure and often unintelligible Heideggerian concepts such as the event, *Aletheia* and his understanding of negation.

In the second chapter, we compared Heidegger's metaphysics with Meinong's metaphysics discussing both the similarity and the differences between the two philosophers. Such a comparison delivers a better understanding of Heidegger's intentionality and Heidegger's paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. It also casts a new light on one of the most unintelligible part of Meinong's philosophy, namely defective objects.

In the third chapter, we discussed Heidegger's understanding of nothingness, and we presented his argument according to which nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. We

also developed a paraconsistent mereological system in which the complement of the totality (interpreted as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness) has the same inconsistent features as Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness. The totality is taken to be the fusion of everything that is.

In the fourth and last chapter, we presented Heidegger's account of grounding, according to which **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds everything without being grounded. After that, in the light of the interpretation presented in chapter 1, we showed how Heidegger should have revised his grounding theory in order to do justice to the idea that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity.

The present work is mainly focused on Heidegger's answer to the question of being developed after the *Kehre*. As such, a great part of both his philosophy (for instance, his philosophical thesis about the origin of the work of art, poetry and technology) and his interpretations of Nietzsche, Heraclitus and Plato are not considered. I believe that the interpretation defended here will cast a new light also on parts of Heidegger's thought that are not directly address in this work. I hope to address these matters in future work.

## Chapter 7

# Glossary

**Anwesenheit:** ‘presence’. In *Being and time* (1927), this term is used to identify entities that are ‘stable’ or ‘concretely present’. He inherits this term from Aristotle (cf. Heidegger, 1993) and it refers to the essence (*οὐσία*) of all things. Only after *Being and time* and starting from the courses given in Marburg (namely in his later period), Heidegger associates **Anwesenheit** to the German term **Präsenz**, namely the way in which entities stay in front of a subject. Consistently with the phenomenological tradition, all entities that are represented by a subject (or by the mental activities of a subject) are *present* – they have presence. As it is argued in the first chapter of the present work (pp. 16-18) and since we are mainly concerned with Heidegger’s philosophy after *Being and time*, we always interpret **Anwesenheit** as **Präsenz**.

**Augenblick:** ‘instant’. With this term, according to his phenomenology of the *Dasein*, Heidegger refers to a very specific moment of time in which the human beings authentically realize themselves in asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Even though this term finds its theoretical formulation in *Being and time* (1927, p. 397-414), Heidegger inherits it from both the Aristotelian and the Christian tradition. Indeed, Aristotle characterizes the instant as the good or profitable moment to act (cf. Heidegger, 1993) while Saint Paul thinks that the instant (namely what uniquely matters in a Christian life) is the moment in which Christ came to redeem the world (cf. Heidegger, 1995). In the late part of his philosophical trajectory, Heidegger considers the instant as the moment of the event [*Ereignis*], namely when the *Dasein* understands that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1957; Heidegger, 1989a). For more

details, see pages 30 and 31 of the present work.

**Dasein**: ‘human being’. This is one of the few terms that never changed meaning during the whole career of Heidegger. According to Heidegger, **Dasein** is the ontological constitution of the human being. Only human beings can have the full understanding of their position in the world (of their own *being-in-the-world* [*in-der-Welt-sein*]) because their being (their way of being [*Sein*] or, in Heidegger’s terminology, their existence) is characterized by the possibility of asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** [*Seinsfrage*]. Only in the late Heidegger and, in particular, in his *Contributions to philosophy* (1989a), **Dasein** is actually able to answer this question, participating to the even of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** [*Ereignis*]. This is shown in the first chapter of the present work (pp. 24-32).

**Ereignis**: ‘event’. This term was employed by Heidegger from the beginning of his career: as Volpi points out (2010), it is possible to find it in some manuscripts dated 1919. In *Being and time* (1927), the ‘event’ refers to a specific experience which a subject lives in first person. For instance, given the framework proposed in *Being and time*, when human beings love, pray, fight, they are part of an ‘event’, which is concerned with their own personal, subjective experience. This characterization of the event is counter-posed to *Vorgang*, namely a mechanical ‘circumstance’ in which human beings (with their personal experiences) are not an essential part. For instance, a ‘circumstance’ (*Vorgang*) is a natural or physical process: a stone that falls or a wave that crashes against the cliff. In the second part of his philosophical trajectory, Heidegger uses the term ‘event’ with a new meaning. As it is shown by a handwritten note on a margin of the first edition of his *Letter on Humanism* (collected in Heidegger, 1967, pp. 267-317), the ‘event’ becomes a crucial idea in his attempt at answering the question of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In *Contributions to Philosophy*, the ‘event’ is the moment in which **Dasein** understands and accepts the contradictory nature of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. For more details, see Section 1.3 of the first chapter in the present work.

**Erzitterung**: ‘vibration’ or ‘oscillation’. In *Contributions to philosophy*, Heidegger describes **Ereignis** as a vibration or an oscillation. According to the interpretation presented in the first chapter of the present work (pp.24-32), **Ereignis** is the vibration of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** between the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (because of the onto-

logical difference) and the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because we can refer to it). As we have pointed out, this oscillation is just a metaphor to describe how the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood and, ultimately, accepted as the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself. Such an oscillation or vibration has been formally described by the paraconsistent mereological systems presented in Chapter 3 (pp.93-100), according to which the complement of the totality (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness) is both an entity and not an entity. In particular, see theorems (9a) and (9b). It is also interesting to notice that, in German, *Erzitterung* can mean ‘earthquake’. As Heidegger claims at the beginning of his *Contributions to philosophy* (cf. 1989a, p. 121), the realization that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity can have the effect of an earthquake in shaking the idea that contradictions are always unacceptable.

**Existenz**: ‘existence’. This term appears for the first time in *Being and time* (1927) and it is uniquely used to characterize the mode of being of *Dasein* (namely the human being). This means that Heidegger’s *Existenz* has a different meaning than the traditional latin expression *existentia*, which refers to the property of *being real* or *being material*. Indeed, *Existenz* means the unique way in which the human being dwells in the world (for more details, see Section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). Moreover, the human being is the only entity that properly exists because, according to Heidegger, the human being is the only entity that can interrogate and question the world he or she is in, asking the question of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

**Grund**: ‘reason’. In German, **Grund** means the bottom of something (for instance, the bottom of a glass). However, Heidegger uses this word to refer to the metaphysical reason in virtue of which everything is an entity. As we have claimed in Section 1.1 of the present work, all entities are entities because they are grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**; thus, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the **Grund** of all entities. In the *Principle of Reason* (1957), Heidegger starts to write **Grund** as **Abgrund**, namely a groundless ground (or, in other terms, an **Un-grund** or a *non-ground*). As we have argued in the last chapter of the present work, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is (also) not an entity and since everything that is an entity is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too, then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is ungrounded because it is not an entity.

**Kehre:** ‘turn’. In German, this term refers to the mountain hairpins but Heidegger uses it to indicate the turn in his thought, that happens at the beginning of the 1930s. Given the interpretation presented in this work, such a turn corresponds to the development of the *Ereignis* and the endorsement of the dialethic solution to the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

**Seiendsein:** ‘being an entity’. This term perfectly describes the meaning of *Sein*, namely the ‘being an entity of an entity’. Unfortunately, it is not often used by Heidegger himself and it appears only in a short gloss in an essay entitled ‘Hegel and the Greeks’ (collected in Heidegger, 1967).

**Selbstheit:** ‘being itself’. In *Identity and Difference* (1957a), Heidegger suggests that this term is a synonymous of *Sein*. As we argue in Section 2.1.3, this understanding of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is similar to the interpretation given by Priest (2014c) of the Meinongian *Außersein*. Everything that is an entity has *Sein* or it is grounded in *Sein*; moreover, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is interpreted as *being self-identical* too, every entity, in virtue of its *begin an entity*, is identical to itself – it is self-identical.

**Sinn:** ‘meaning’. From *Being and time* (cf, 1927, pp.183-189; pp.384-392), this term is understood in an existential way. According to Heidegger, human beings understand the ‘meaning’ of something (a fact, an event or a thought) if and only if human beings experience what they are trying to understand. This is true for the late Heidegger as well: in the *Contributions to philosophy* (1989a), the *Dasein* can understand the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** only through the personal experience of thinking about it. The oscillation between the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (namely the *Erzitterung*) is realized if and only if *Dasein* thinks about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

**Welt:** ‘world’. This term was used for the first time in *Being and time* (1927, pp. 333-334): this first characterization of the ‘world’ is developed in relation to the phenomenological description of *Dasein*. Thus, the world is understood as the space dwelled or inhabited by *Dasein*. In the late Heidegger, this term changes its meaning. As it is discussed in *The origin of the work of art* and *The essence of the ground* (collected

in Heidegger, 1967), the world is understood as the collection of all entities (including ideas, numbers, feelings and nonexistent objects) – everything that is an entity is in the world. Formally, we have described Heidegger’s account of the world as the mereological sum of everything that is self-identical. Indeed, since all entities are entities in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, and since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood as *being self-identical*, then all entities are self-identical. Moreover, since the world contains all entities (namely everything that is self-identical), in Chapter 3 we have characterized the world exactly as the collection of everything that is self-identical (or, more formally, as the least upper bound of the self-identicals). See pp. 87-93.

**Wirklichkeit:** ‘being real’ or ‘being material’. This term is used in *Being and time* (1927, p.120 and p. 253). It is a synonym of the latin word *realitas*, namely what is real or material. *Sachheit* is the property in virtue of which something is in the world as something that is concretely present (see the term *Welt\** in the Glossary).



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I, **Filippo Gabrio Edoardo Casati**, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately **44000** words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me, or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in **September 2013** and as a candidate for the degree of **PhD of Philosophy** in **September 2013**; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between **2013** and **2017**.

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## Abstract

In my thesis, I present a novel interpretation of the so-called second Heidegger. In the first chapter I discuss the paradox of *being*, according to which talking and thinking about *being* leads to a contradiction. I also show that the late Heidegger endorses dialetheism, accepting the contradiction of *being* as a true one. In the second chapter, I present a comparison between Heidegger and Meinong. First of all, I discuss some similarities between Heidegger's account of intentionality and Meinong's account of intentionality, and Heidegger's ontology and Meinong's ontology. Secondly, I interpret Heidegger's being as a special case in Meinong's 'Theory of Objects'. In the third chapter, after showing that, according to Heidegger, *being* is identical to nothingness, I present a paraconsistent mereological system that makes formal sense of Heidegger's metaphysics. In this mereological system, the totality is taken to be the mereological sum of everything that is and the complement of the totality is interpreted as nothingness, namely what we obtain removing all things from the totality. Since, according to Heidegger, nothingness is *being*, the complement of totality is taken to be *being* as well. Finally, in the fourth and last chapter, I discuss Heidegger's theory of grounding. I show that the early Heidegger endorses a particularly strong form of foundationalism. Moreover, I present two paraconsistent versions of foundationalism (called para-foundationalism 1.0 and para-foundationalism 2.0) that can accommodate the inconsistent views endorsed by the second Heidegger.

# **BEING**

A dialetheic interpretation of the late Heidegger

Filippo G.E. Casati

February 6, 2017



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For my father Giovanni Casati



*Speaking with Heidegger, the Buddhist monk [Maha Mani] said: “ultimately, there is only nothingness. Nevertheless, nothingness is not nothing; on the contrary, nothingness is also the opposite of nothing. (...) Nothingness is – it is nothing at all and everything”. Heidegger agreed with the monk and he said: “This is exactly what I have said my whole life”. The monk: “You should come in our lands [in the East]. We will understand you” (Saviani, 1998, p. 35).*



# Acknowledgment

This work started when my father's life ended.  
Every word contained in these pages is for him.

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# Chapter 1

## Prelude

In his hut, lost in the Black Forest, near Todtnauberg, Martin Heidegger changed the history of European philosophy. As Karl Löwith pointed out (2011), his metaphysics has had an extraordinary influence on the history of continental philosophy, becoming the center of an evolving debate. Having said that, most of Heidegger's philosophy remains obscure and incomprehensible. This is particularly true for the developments of Heidegger's ideas after the so-called *Kehre*. The expression '*Kehre*' was used by Heidegger himself to refer to the turning point, in the mid-1930s, in which Heidegger abandons and tries to overcome the phenomenology defended in *Being and Time* (1927). Following this distinction, scholars have decided to divide Martin Heidegger's philosophy in two main parts: Heidegger's philosophy before the *Kehre* (also known as 'the first Heidegger') and Heidegger's philosophy after the *Kehre* (also known as 'the second Heidegger').

As we have already mentioned, very often, the so-called second Heidegger is considered inaccessible, obscure and unintelligible. His *Contributions to philosophy* (1989a), a posthumous essay which represents Heidegger's most radical attempt at systematizing his later thoughts, was described as "an idiosyncratic symphony of meanings" (Polt, 1999, p. 140), a "collection of ellipses" and "an assertoric monolith" (Schurmann, 1992, p. 313). Such critiques have been extended to the whole trajectory of his late philosophy.

Beside these stylistic observations, late Heidegger's philosophy seems to be highly problematic also because of its heterodox content. For instance, in the contemporary debate, his endorsement of poetry and philology as a guide for philosophy was often taken to be wrong (cf. Priest, 2015). However, the main issue is that, during the

last trajectory of his philosophy, Heidegger clearly holds inconsistent positions, which intentionally challenge the principle of non-contradiction (cf. Philipse, 1999). Since, according to the majority of philosophers, contradictory statements, as with any other possible violation of the fundamental laws of (classical) logic, are absurd, Heidegger's metaphysics has often been treated as absurd too.

This rejection of the late Heidegger is particularly evident in the case of analytic philosophers, who have focused their attention exclusively on the early Heidegger. On the one hand, the phenomenological account of the human being proposed in the first division of *Being and Time* has generated a vast debate in philosophy of mind and cognitive science (cf. Dreyfus, 1990; Haugeland, 2013; Kiverstein and Wheeler, 2012); on the other hand, Heidegger's early attempt at answering the question of Being has recently produced an interesting debate in analytic metaphysics as well (McDaniel, 2009; Moore, 2012; Priest, 2006, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2015). But what about the late Heidegger? Unfortunately, no analytic philosophers have seriously engaged with it.

The present work tries to fill this gap in the Heideggerian scholarship. It presents a novel interpretation of the late Heidegger according to which it is possible to give a rigorous and understandable reading of his arguments, overcoming the esoteric style. Moreover, in order to make sense of the many inconsistencies of late Heidegger's metaphysics, we show that, at the end of his philosophical trajectory, he endorsed *dialethesim*, namely the view according to which there are true contradictions.

The ideas that ground this work were presented in more than 25 talks around the world. I had the pleasure to discuss my ideas in Australia (University of Melbourne, Monash University), in Germany (Paderborn Universität; Ruhr-Universität Bochum), in the United States (City University of New York, University of Massachusetts, Lehigh University, Ohio University), in Japan (University of Kyoto), in India (Statistical Institute of Kolkata), in Korea (Yonsei University) and, finally, in Italy (University of Padua and University of Turin). I would like to thank all the people that, during the last three years, gave me feedbacks on my research. Invited by Professor Wansing, I also had the invaluable opportunity to teach a postgraduate course about my own interpretation of Heidegger: I thank my students for pushing me to make my ideas both clearer and sharper.

Some of the ideas presented in this thesis are already published. Part of the first

chapter is published in *Philosophy Compass* under the title ‘The recent Engagement between Analytic Philosophy and Heidegger Thought: Metaphysics and Mind’, while the last chapter is forthcoming in a collection of essays entitled *Reality and its structure*, published by Oxford University Press and edited by Ricki Bliss and Graham Priest. Some material of the third chapter has also grounded my critique of Oliver and Smiley’s interpretation of Heidegger’s nothingness published under the title ‘Better than Zilch?’ for *Logic and Logical Philosophy*. Finally, some of my ideas about Meinongianism has been published in *Philosophia* under the title ‘Nonexistent objects as truth-makers’ and they will appear in the first and second volume of the second edition of Routley’s *Exploring Meinong’s Jungle and Beyond* (Springer).

To conclude, I would like to make two remarks about both the translations of Heidegger used in the present work and the formal notations employed in chapter 3 and chapter 4. First of all, since the english translations are famously unreliable, all the translations of Heidegger’s texts are mine. I translated them comparing the original German text, the english translation and the italian translation. All the references come from the italian editions. Moreover, in order to make Heidegger’s language more accessible, I added a Glossary in which some of the Heideggerian jargon is explained. The terms that appear in the Glossary are marked by a star in the main text of my thesis. It is also important to mention that, following Heidegger himself, we write **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in order to refer to the treatment of Heidegger’s being before the *Kehre* and we write **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** in order to refer to the treatment of Heidegger’s being after the *Kehre*. Finally, concerning the formal notation, I would like to specify that, in chapter 3, the arrow ( $\rightarrow$ ) simply represents a logical connective (which has to be read as ‘if . . . then’), while, in chapter 4, the arrow ( $\rightarrow$ ) represents a grounding relation: thus,  $x \rightarrow y$  means ‘x depends on y’. The notation will be explained in more details in the relevant chapters.

The general structure of this work goes as follows:

- **First Chapter: *Sein*.** The first chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I introduce the two main components of Heidegger's metaphysics, namely Being [*Sein*] and the ontological difference [*ontologische Differenz*]. According to Heidegger, Being makes all entities *be* and, since there is an *ontological difference* between Being and entities, Being itself is not an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1927). Then, we show why talking and thinking about Being leads to a paradox. In a nutshell, the paradox of Being goes as follows: since Heidegger takes an entity to be everything we can refer to with an intentional activity, whenever we speak or think about something, we speak or think about a *thing*, an entity. From these metaphysical premises, it follows that, even though Being is not an entity (because of the ontological difference), Being has to be an entity too (because we are referring to it right now!). In the second part of this chapter, we propose an interpretation according to which the late Heidegger solves the problem of Being challenging (classical) logic and accepting the fact that Being is *truly* an entity and not an entity. From this point of view, Heidegger endorses *dialethesim*, namely the metaphysical position according to which there are true contradictions. To conclude, this chapter shows that this interpretation has some interesting exegetical virtues, casting a new light on crucial notions in Heidegger's philosophy, such as the Event [*Ereignis*\*] (cf. Heidegger, 1989a), the truth [*Aletheia*] (cf. Heidegger, 1988), along with his account of negation (cf. Heidegger, 1989a).
- **Second Chapter: *Außersein*.** In the second chapter, we reformulate the paradox of Being in more familiar analytic terms proposing an analogy between Meinong and Heidegger. We defend an account of Meinong according to which every time we speak and think about something, we speak and think about an intentional object (in Meinong's terms, a *Gegenstand*). Moreover, every intentional object trivially instantiates the property of *being an object* (following Meinong himself, let's call such a property outside-being [*Außersein*] (cf. Priest, 2014c)). At this point, the analogy with Heidegger should appear clear: as for Meinong, every intentional object has *Außersein*, for Heidegger every entity has Being [*Sein*]. However, since in Meinong's framework, it is possible to speak and think about something that is not an object, Meinong finds himself in the same situation of Heidegger. Indeed,

if something is not an object, then it does not instantiate the property of *being an object* (*Außersein*). Nevertheless, since we speak and think about that something that is not an object (we are doing it right now!), that something has to be an object too – it has to instantiate the property of *being an object*. Thus, as Heidegger's Being is an entity and not, according to Meinong's metaphysics, something that is not an object, it is an object and not.

- **Third Chapter: *Nichtsein*.** The third chapter is divided into two main parts. In first part, we argue in favor of the identity between Being and nothingness, which is defended by Heidegger himself in his *What is metaphysics?* (1967). Given that Being and nothingness are identical, since Heidegger's Being is contradictory, nothingness is contradictory as well. We also continue the comparison between the Heideggerian and the Meinongian ontology, reviewing some of the contemporary neo-Meinongian accounts of nothingness (Jacquette, 2013, 2015; Parsons, 1980; Priest, 2014b; Sylvan, 195x -1996). From this comparison, we see how it is possible to formally understand Heidegger's paradox of Being and nothingness. In the second part, we present a paraconsistent mereological system according to which Being and nothingness are represented as the complement of the totality for the following reason. Since the totality is characterized as the mereological sum of everything that is an entity, the complement of the totality (which is the mereological sum of everything that is not part of the totality) is not an entity. This is why the complement of the totality represents being and nothingness. However, given the *dialetheic* interpretation of Heidegger presented in chapter one, Being and nothingness are also entities: it follows that the complement of the totality needs to be part of the totality too. Such a mereological system is important because, contrary to a great part of the secondary literature, it shows that late Heidegger's metaphysics is certainly contradictory but not unacceptable. Indeed, since it is grounded on a paraconsistent logic which can tolerate contradictions, the mereological system presented in this chapter is inconsistent but not logically trivial.
- **Fourth Chapter: *Grundsein*.** In this last chapter, we bridge Heidegger's discussion of Being with the current grounding literature. As we claim in the first chapter, Being provides the reason in virtue of which every entity is an entity. Another possible way to understand the relation between Being and entities is that Being *grounds* entities. Nevertheless, since Being is contradictory (as we argue in the first

chapter, being is an entity and not), the grounding relation is inconsistent as well. Indeed, since all entities need to be grounded in Being and Being is not an entity, Being is ungrounded. At the same time, since Being is an entity as well, then Being needs to be grounded in something and, since Being is the ground of all entities, Being grounds itself. Thus, Being is both (fully) grounded and (fully) ungrounded. We call this new inconsistent grounding theory *para-foundationalism*. To conclude, using Bliss and Priest's framework (forthcoming), we propose two formal models that can show how, working in a paraconsistent setting, para-foundationalism does not lead to logical triviality.

## Chapter 2

### *Sein*

**Overview.** *Eĩvai*, *Sein*, *being*. These terms have characterized the philosophical debate since its origin. The phenomenological evidence that there *are* human beings (as there *are* tables, chairs, prime numbers and works of art) has been an inexhaustible source of philosophical interest. Why *is* there such a vast multitude of entities? What makes these entities *be*? And, if they *are* in virtue of their own *being*, what is *being*? In what follows, we discuss the answer given by Heidegger. We show how, in his late production, he endorses the idea that every entity *is* in virtue of being [*Sein*] and that being itself is both an entity and not an entity. In Heidegger's terms, since he takes the world [*Welt*<sup>\*</sup>] to be the totality of all entities, being itself is part of the world (because it is an entity) and it is not part of the world (because it is not an entity).

**Structure.** In **Section 1.1**, we introduce the two main components of Heidegger's metaphysics, namely being and the ontological difference. In **Section 1.2**, we show how, according to Heidegger himself, speaking and thinking about being leads to a paradox. In **Section 1.3**, we present a novel interpretation, according to which, in his late production, Heidegger deals with this paradox endorsing dialethesim, namely the metaphysical position according to which there are true contradictions. In **Section 1.4** and in **Section 1.5**, we argue that this interpretation casts a new light on crucial notions in Heidegger's philosophy, such as truth and negation.

## 2.1 Being<sub>MET</sub>

Freiburg, 18 June 1950. Dear Mr. Buchner, thinking about being [*Sein*] is something very risky and always open to the possibility of mistakes. (...) However, maybe, one day, it will be possible to find a solution among all these attempts that, like mine, look cluttered and arbitrary. For the moment, it is just the pilgrimage of the asking-answering which demands vocation. Please, remain on this path and correspond to the vocation of thinking. Always yours, Martin Heidegger (Heidegger, 1957b, pp.122-123).

Faithful to the suggestion that he made to Mr. Buchner, Heidegger patiently adhered to that solitary path trying to answer the so-called question of being [*Seinsfrage*]: how shall we understand the expression ‘being’? What is its meaning? What is being?

According to Heidegger, the meaning of ‘being’ has been often considered “self-evident” (Heidegger, 1927, p.3) because, in our everyday life, we always deal with it. On the one hand, we are surrounded by entities that *are*.<sup>1</sup> There are rooms, tables, trees and windows. There are concrete entities such as hammers, jumpers and walls; there are abstract entities such as numbers, equations and ideas. In one way or another, all these entities *are*. On the other hand, being is often used in our languages and, in particular, in propositions such as ‘the sky *is* blue’ or ‘I *am* happy’. Nevertheless, from both the fact that we daily deal with entities that are, and the fact that we use the verb ‘to be’, it does not follow that we, thereby, understand the meaning [*Sinn*\*] of being. Thus, the question of being remains unanswered.

Heidegger thinks that being can be understood in two different ways: metaphysically and grammatically. Let’s begin with the former one.

**Being<sub>MET</sub>** : being as that which makes all entities entities

This first characterization interprets **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the *quidditas* (the *that-ness*) of a *quid* (of a *that*). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ‘*being an entity*’ of an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not make this table exactly this table (namely the table that is flat and placed in New

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<sup>1</sup>Heidegger uses different terms to talk about entities [*Seiendes*] (for instance, thing [*Ding*] and object [*Objectum*]). All these terms have different (phenomenological) meanings. Nevertheless, for simplicity, the present work uses all these terms as synonyms.

York); it only makes this table something and not nothing.<sup>2</sup> Even though this “seems just trivial” (Heidegger, 1927, p.4), **Being<sub>MET</sub>** makes all entities be. Such a characterization can be understood in three ways.

[1] First of all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as *Seiendsein\**, namely the *being an entity* of all entities. According to Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** determines entities as entities (cf. Heidegger, 1927, p.13). Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** makes entities entities, when an entity ceases to be, it is not an entity anymore; it is nothing at all. “The lack of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] means the lack of the capacity of enduring of an entity as an entity” (Heidegger, 1966, p.74).

[2] Secondly, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as *Grund\**, namely the ground of all entities, which makes all entities be. In Heidegger’s words, “being [as **Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is intrinsically ground-like, what gives ground” (Heidegger, 1936, pp. 170-171) because it is the reason *in virtue of* which every entity is an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason why all entities *are*. Since all entities are entities, all entities need to be grounded in something that makes them entities, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**; entities can be entities *only* in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and no entity can be an entity in virtue of itself. Thus, as we have claimed before, if something is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is nothing at all.

[3] Finally, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as *Selbstheit\**, namely the *being itself* of an entity or the property of *being self-identical*. According to Heidegger, “the most adequate formula [to express this idea] is  $A = A$  (...)”, which should be read as “every A is identical to itself [*ist selber dasselbe*]” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.28). He also adds that “[the *is* contained in the proposition ‘A is identical to itself’] says why every entity is” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.30). Therefore, not only is it the case that “each entity is itself” (Heidegger, 1957a, p. 28) but it is also the case that an entity is an entity exactly in virtue of the fact that each entity is itself. From the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, understood as *being self-identical*, determines entities as entities, it follows that, what is not self-

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<sup>2</sup>During a conference held in 1955, Heidegger claims that philosophy should not answer questions such as “what is *that* – beauty? What is *that* – nature? What is *that* – knowledge? What is *that* – justice?” (Heidegger, 1956, p.17) because philosophy is not concerned with specific entities (such as the beauty, the nature, the knowledge and the justice) but with the reason in virtue of which all entities are, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

identical, it is not an entity either: once again, it is nothing at all.

Following Heidegger, these three understandings of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are equivalent: since all entities have the feature of *being entities*, all entities are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Similarly, since all entities are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, all entities are self-identical. If something is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is not self-identical either and, thus, it does not have the feature of *being an entity*. It is nothing.<sup>3</sup>

Let's continue with the second understanding of being, namely the grammatical one.

**Being<sub>GRA</sub>** : being as expressed through the copula

This second characterization interprets being as what is expressed by a grammatical component of the language which is present in statements of the form: 'x *is* [y]' (where y is optional). At least in an Aristotelian framework (which is the one employed by Heidegger), **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** unifies parts of the language (for instance, 'sky' and 'blue') in order to obtain a meaningful sentence according to which 'the sky *is* blue'.<sup>4</sup> Without **Being<sub>GRA</sub>**, the parts of the language do not unify themselves into a meaningful proposition, as in the case of 'sky blue'. According to Heidegger, in unifying propositions, **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** expresses both the being of existence and the being of predication. On the one hand, "being [**Being<sub>GRA</sub>**] is found in that-ness and what-ness, reality, the objective presence of something, subsistence, existence" (Heidegger, 1927, p.6); on the other hand,

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<sup>3</sup>Someone could ask why I think that these three understandings of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are actually equivalent. Concerning this point, I would like to draw a distinction. On the one hand, I am not committed to believe that these three characterizations are interchangeable. On the other hand, I am committed to show that Heidegger treats them as interchangeable. Indeed, Heidegger defines **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in these three ways in (1927, 1936, 1957a). Having said that, it is also possible to defend the equivalence of these three characterizations of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** assuming that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is something that all entities have in common. First of all, following Priest, all entities *are* – all entities have in common **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Consequently, he believes that all entities are *in virtue of* **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason why everything is. Moreover, Priest believes that every entity is self-identical because this is a logic truth (see, 2014c). The three characterizations of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are interchangeable: they all refer to something that is common to all entities.

<sup>4</sup>It is important to specify that this is what Heidegger thinks Aristotle claims about the verb 'to be' and not necessarily what Aristotle really claims. For the Heideggerian interpretation of Aristotle and the verb 'to be', see (1966) and (1993). For a complete account of possible other ways of interpreting Aristotle's account of 'being', see Moro (2010).

“being [**Being<sub>GRA</sub>**] is used in all knowledge and predicating” as in “‘I *am* happy’ and similar statements” (Heidegger, 1927, p.3).

Even though the focus of Heidegger’s research is **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, he is also interested in **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** because he believes that the latter necessarily implies the former. Indeed, when we say either that an entity *is* (namely that an entity exists), or that an entity *is* something, we indirectly attribute **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to an entity. If we say that ‘the sky *is* blue’, we refer to an entity (the sky) that instantiates the property of *being blue*; if I think that ‘I *am* happy’, I refer to an entity (myself) that instantiates the property of *being happy*. In both cases, an entity is required in order to be able to say or think something about it. If this is the case, since an entity is required, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is required as well because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes all entities entities. In other words, ‘the sky is blue’ is a meaningful proposition in virtue of **Being<sub>GRA</sub>**, which brings together parts of the language unifying them into a meaningful proposition. Then, the meaningful proposition is about an entity (‘the sky’) which has some features (‘blue’) and, of course, such an entity is an entity in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Every time we employ **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** and we meaningfully unify a proposition, the proposition is about an entity and this entity is an entity in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. This is why **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** always implies **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.<sup>5</sup> Having said this, in what follows, we will be focused on the metaphysical aspect of the question of being, namely on **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

As it has been presented until now, the first characterization of being (which is **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) faces a problem, namely it appears to give rise to a vicious infinite regress. To see it clearly, take into consideration the second understanding of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the ground of all entities. As we have claimed before, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities and all entities need to be grounded in something else. Moreover, no entity can be an entity in virtue of itself. If everything is an entity, including **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** needs to be grounded in something else as well. For the sake of the argument, let’s say that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded in **Being<sub>MET-2</sub>**. However, as everything is an entity, what grounds **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely **Being<sub>MET-2</sub>**, must be an entity as well and, as such, **Being<sub>MET-2</sub>** must be grounded in something else too (let’s say that

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<sup>5</sup>Heidegger believes that language is always concerned with entities and, as such, it always implies **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the reason in virtue of which all entities are entities. He metaphorically claims that “letters are the signs for the sounds of the voice, the sounds of the voice are the signs of our soul; these [namely the signs of our soul] are the signs for the entities” (Heidegger, 1959, p.160). This is way words are symbols (Heidegger uses the greek expression *σύμβολα*), which express or refer to entities.

**Being<sub>MET-2</sub>** is grounded in **Being<sub>MET-3</sub>**). At this point, it is easy to see that we are off on an infinite regress; a regress which one may suppose to be vicious. If **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity itself, then entities are grounded in something of the same kind, namely entities. One may think that this is a problem because, even though a member of a kind can explain why another member of the same kind is, a member of a kind cannot explain why that very same kind is in the first place. In other terms, one may take as reasonable the idea that, in our *explanans*, we cannot invoke that very thing for which we are seeking an explanation. In Heidegger, where **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, the infinite regress is vicious because we are invoking an entity to explain why there are entities in the first place.<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult to say if Heidegger was actually aware of this problem; what is sure is that he avoids this potential issue, stipulating that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is simply another kind of thing than the kind of things that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** wants to explain (namely entities). More precisely, Heidegger stipulates that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not a thing at all. This assumption is called ‘*ontological difference*’.<sup>7</sup> Heidegger assumes that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not a simple entity among entities. “Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] cannot be thought as an entity” (Heidegger, 2010, p.4). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes any entity an entity, but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity itself. In other terms, everything that is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because it is not something – it is not an entity. “The being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities is not itself an entity” (Heidegger, 1927, p.6).

In support of the ontological difference between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, Heidegger

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<sup>6</sup>We do not want to say that this argument (namely the argument according to which, in our *explanans*, we cannot invoke that very thing for which we are seeking an explanation) is necessarily correct. We simply want to point out that, if you think that such an argument is correct, then you may find problematic the characterization of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** delivered above. It is also important to remark that the argument discussed is a common one in the contemporary analytic debate concerning grounding. See Bliss (2014), Passmore (1970) and Lowe (2003). Nevertheless, this idea was recently challenged by Maitzen (2013). As it was suggested by Kris McDaniel in private conversation, it would interesting to run a comparison between Heidegger’s ontological difference and Aristotle’s argument about the fact that being is not a genus. This topic will be developed in my future research.

<sup>7</sup>One clarification. Heidegger deals with three kinds of ‘difference’: **[1]** *ontologische Differenz*, namely the difference between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and entities; **[2]** *transzendente Differenz*, namely the difference between entities and their ways of being (such a difference will be discussed in section 2.2.2 of chapter 2) and **[3]** *transzendente Differenz*, namely the difference between a normal entity and God. In this thesis, we will be focused on **[1]**.

proposes a grammatical argument as well. Consider a proposition such as ‘the wall is’. The noun ‘wall’ refers to an entity, namely the wall in front of you or behind me. But what shall we say about ‘is’? If we assume that ‘is’ (namely ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’) refers to an entity, then the proposition ‘the wall is’ would be nothing more than a simple list of two entities: the wall and is (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**). However, this cannot be the case because, in an obvious sense, the proposition ‘the wall is’ has a meaning that a list of two entities (such as the wall and is or **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) does not have. Therefore, Heidegger concludes, the ‘is’ of the proposition ‘the wall is’ does not refer to any entity because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. One can hear the thoughts discussed until now in the following passage:

If we painstakingly attend to the language in which we articulate what the principle of reason [*Satz vom Grund*] says as a principle of being, then it becomes clear we speak of being in an odd manner that is, in truth, inadmissible. We say: being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] and ground/reason [*Grund\**] ‘are’ the same. Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] ‘is’ the abyss [*Abgrund*]. When we say something ‘is’ and ‘is such and so’, then that something is, in such an utterance, represented as a being. Only a being ‘is’; the ‘is’ itself -being- ‘is’ not. The wall in front of you and behind me is. It immediately shows itself to us as something present. But where is its ‘is’? Where should we seek the presencing of the wall? Probably these questions already run awry (Heidegger, 1957, p.15).

The idea that there is a difference between what is the ontological reason of everything (in Heidegger’s jargon, **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) and everything else is not something that Heidegger introduced for the first time. On the contrary, it is an idea that he has inherited from both the neo-platonic school and the medieval tradition. Heidegger explicitly refers to Plotinus and his idea that the One, namely the reason in virtue of which all entities are, is not a simple entity among other entities. Indeed, as Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the One of Plotinus is not an entity either. The One does not have properties, features, characteristics and forms, otherwise it would be something (namely an entity) with *that* property, *that* feature, *that* characteristic and *that* form. According to Plotinus, “when the soul burns of love for the One, it gets rid of all its forms (...). The soul cannot see the One if it engages with entities” (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.92). According to Heidegger’s *Phenomenology of Religious Life* (1995), the same idea appears in medieval mysticism. For instance, Saint John of the Cross claims that God (the God in virtue of which all

entities are because God creates everything out of nothing) does not have properties because it is not an entity at all. Metaphorically, God is the “dark night” in which nothing can be seen, perceived or distinguished because there is nothing to be seen, perceived or distinguished. God is not something (it is not an entity) because God has no form, shape or feature. This is also the reason why Saint John writes: “when the soul meets God, it is without form or shape. Forget and abandon all things [all entities]!” (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.98).<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Heidegger finds a fascinating synthesis of the neo-platonic ideas and medieval mysticism studying Meister Eckhart’s *Sermons*: as Heidegger himself claims in his Doctoral thesis, Eckhart’s ‘experience of life’ [*Lebenserfahrung*] shows how God [*Gott*] is purely transcendental, beyond both the world and the ideas. According to Eckhart, there is an absolute separation [*Abgeschiedenheit*] between God’s divine nature [*Gottheit*] and the entities (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.98). He thinks that, in virtue of the difference between God and all entities, God is nothing, namely God is not an entity or a thing at all. Like Plotinus, Eckhart writes: “when the soul reaches the One, (...) it finds God as nothingness” (cf. Vannini, 2007, p.98).<sup>9</sup>

As Plotinus’ One and Saint John’s God are beyond all entities, because they are not entities at all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is beyond all entities too. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world [*Welt\**] because, according to Heidegger, the world collects only entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. The world is uniquely composed by entities that can be manipulated, used or broken by human beings, while **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be manipulated, used or broken because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity in the first place. Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>** transcends the world. Since Heidegger’s world is the totality of all entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is outside the totality of all entities because it is not an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the reason in virtue of which everything is, including the world itself) is not part of the world. Since the world is the totality of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason in virtue of which all entities are, there is a world in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Nevertheless, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world.

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<sup>8</sup>Concerning the relation between Heidegger and (neo-)platonism, see his courses on Greek philosophy (cf. Heidegger, 1993) and Plato (cf. Heidegger, 1992). Also, see Cimino (2005) and Narbonne (2001). Concerning Heidegger and St. John of the Cross, see Heidegger (1995) and Caputo (1986).

<sup>9</sup>Concerning the relation between Heidegger and Eckhart, see Flaumbaum (1944) and Schürmann (1973). More generally, concerning the relation between Heidegger and medieval mysticism, see Fumet (1963), Lewalter (1950) and Perotti (1974).

## 2.2 The problem of Being<sub>MET</sub>

As it is presented until now, the path taken by Heidegger to grasp the meaning of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not look particularly troubled. To understand why he describes his philosophical attempts to Mr. Buchner with such hopeless pessimism, it is necessary to introduce a new element. In the *History of the concept of time*, Heidegger claims that intentionality is one of the “decisive discoveries” that he has inherited from phenomenology (Heidegger, 1989b, p. 3). Following Brentano and (to a certain extent) Husserl, Heidegger shares the idea that intentionality is the distinctive way in which the human mind is directed towards entities. Every time something is perceived or thought, someone perceives or thinks something, namely an entity. Adrian Moore explains intentionality in the following way: “for any flash of understanding, there is an object of understanding; for any pang of remorse, an object of remorse; for any hallucination, an object of hallucination” (Moore, 2012, p.439).

In the *Wegmarken*, Heidegger claims that the word ‘entity’ “means what is put in front of the perception, the imagination, the judgment, the desire and the intuition. (...) An entity is what is represented” (Heidegger, 1967, p.28). According to Heidegger, every time we refer to something with an intentional act (for example, with our thoughts, imagination or emotional states), this something is an entity. Following Heidegger’s example, when we either say ‘rose’ or think about a rose, we refer to something (namely the rose in the garden); when we either say ‘redness’ or think about the redness of the rose, we refer to something as well (namely the delightful color of roses). Indeed, when “I am mentioning it [when I am mentioning the redness of the rose], I think about it and I represent it” (Heidegger, 1967, p.29). As we have mentioned before, every time we think and say something, something (namely an entity) is thought and said.

As Heidegger claims in *The metaphysical foundation of logic*: “a thought is always a thought about something” because “each thought is related to a specific entity which is in front of us and this entity can be a material object, a geometrical object, or [even] an historical fact” (Heidegger, 1978, p.13). If we think about something, we think about a thing, an entity. If we think about an entity, we think about something which *is* in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. For instance, if we think about Pegasus, we think about an entity with some properties: in this case, we think about an entity which has, among many other properties, the property of *being winged* and the property of *being a horse*. If we

think about an entity, then such an entity is an entity (it has the property of *being an entity*) in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

Moreover, according to Heidegger, “when we speak – implicitly or explicitly – we say being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 25). On the one hand, we explicitly say **Being<sub>MET</sub>** when **Being<sub>GRA</sub>** appears in propositions such as ‘the sky *is* blue’ or ‘the wall *is*’. In this case, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** appears evident because it is explicitly part of the syntactical construction of the propositions in question. For instance, since the sky is blue, the sky is that entity which is blue. Since it is an entity, the sky is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. On the other hand, we implicitly say **Being<sub>MET</sub>** when, in dealing with propositions that do not explicitly contain **Being<sub>GRA</sub>**, we still refer to entities that are ‘*such and such*’. For instance, when we say that ‘the rose perfumes’, we actually say that an entity (the rose) *is* such and such (in this case, it is a rose and it perfumes). Once again, since the rose is that entity which perfumes, the rose is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Regardless the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is explicitly or implicitly stated, “speaking [*Die Sage*] makes appear an entity in its being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 25). “The power of words is to make an entity an entity” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 25).

So, “‘God *is*’, ‘the conference *is* (in the classroom)’, ‘the cup *is* silvery’ and ‘the book *is* mine’ ” (Heidegger, 1966, p. 93).<sup>10</sup> All these entities are entities, namely they are something rather than nothing, because they are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. According to Heidegger, even the world, namely the totality of all entities, is (an entity). Intentional acts are certainly directed towards very different kinds of entities (God, a conference venue, the cup of coffee on my desk, the copy of *Being and Time* in my bag and the world we are in), but all of them are still directed towards entities: as such, these entities are entities in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the meaning of which needs to be understood as “the simple presence [*Anwesenheit*\*] of an entity, the objecthood of an object” (Heidegger,

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<sup>10</sup>Someone may find it strange that, according to Heidegger, God is something (namely an entity) rather than nothing, and that God is in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Let me try to explain why, in Heidegger’s framework, this is not strange at all. According to Heidegger, God, in the Western metaphysical tradition, is (treated as) an entity. Even though God is characterized as a ‘super-entity’, namely as a powerful, omniscient and eternal entity, God is still an entity (see Heidegger, 1995; Heidegger, 1967, Chapter 1 and Heidegger, 1957a). This idea is consistent with the interpretation of Heidegger’s metaphysics, given in the present chapter. Since Heidegger believes that everything we can refer to is an entity and since we can refer to God, then God is an entity. This is also the reason why, God is something (namely an entity) and not nothing. Finally, since every entity is in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and since God is an entity, God is in virtue **Being<sub>MET</sub>** too. See also Galimberti, 2011, Chapter 27 and Vannini, 2007.

1966, p. 101). After *Being and Time*, Heidegger also starts to use *Anwesenheit*\* as a synonymous of *Präsenz* and, according to some interpreters (cf. Volpi, 2010; cf. Carman, 2003), this term is read, at least in the phenomenological tradition, as ‘being represented by a subject’ or ‘being present to the consciousness of a subject’. Whatever we refer to with an intentional activity is an entity and whatever we refer to is an entity in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words, whatever is represented is an entity; whatever is an entity is grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. This is why “thinking is always representing [*Vorstellen*] something [namely an entity]” (Heidegger, 1967, p. 31). From the beginning to the end of his philosophical career, Heidegger explicitly endorsed this position in many different places (Heidegger 1927; Heidegger 1957b; Heidegger 1966; Heidegger 1967).<sup>11</sup>

Working with this definition of ‘entity’, Heidegger also claims that it is impossible to have empty terms because all terms, as all thoughts, refer to something.<sup>12</sup> “Speaking and thinking necessarily objectify because they have to posit an entity to express something” (Heidegger, 1967, p.30). ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’ is not an exception. “The word ‘being’ [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] cannot be an empty one [either]” (Heidegger, 1966, p.89). Exactly this realization turns any attempt of speaking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into that dangerous and risky path described by Heidegger to Mr. Buchner. Indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is supposed to determine an entity as an entity without being an entity. Nevertheless, in saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** determines an entity as an entity, we represent **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as ‘*such and such*’ and this is enough to turn it into what, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not at all, namely an entity.

If it is true that, for any thought, there is an entity that is thought, thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** means that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is already treated as an entity, namely the entity that we think about in thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Even the ontological difference becomes paradoxical because stating that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity makes **Being<sub>MET</sub>** an entity. In saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, we actually state something about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. The fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity turns **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into an entity, namely the entity that is not an entity.

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<sup>11</sup>Heidegger is explicit about the meaning of the word ‘entity’ in his course on Kant. He writes: “God is an entity because God is, in general, something – an *X*. In the same way, a number is an entity: faith and devotion are entities too. (...) Everything that is something and not nothing is an entity” (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 13).

<sup>12</sup>Against the interpretation supported by Oliver and Smiley (2013), I have extensively shown that Heidegger does not accept empty terms in my ‘Better than Zilch?’ (2015a).

Any statement or thought about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot really be about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because this would necessarily imply that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity while, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not. If **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is something, namely the entity that is not an entity. Any thought turns **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into an entity.

Consider what we have previously stated at the end of Section 1.1. According to Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world because the world is the totality of all entities and, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. However, since everything we refer to is an entity and since we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not part of the world, we turn **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into that entity which is not part of the world. Thus, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is that entity that is not part of the world and since the world is the totality of all entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has to be part of the world too. On the one hand, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world because, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. On the other hand, since we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well and, as such, it is part of the world. As soon as we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is dragged into the world as what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not, namely an entity.

Heidegger is perfectly aware of this problem. Nothing can be neither said of nor thought about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, not even that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be neither spoken of nor thought. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is neither effable nor thinkable. However, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is exactly what cannot be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because it is not an entity.

The being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities ‘is’ not itself an entity. The first philosophical step in understanding the problem of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] consists in avoiding telling the *myth on tina diegeishai*, in not ‘telling a story’, that is, not determining entities as entities by tracing them back in their origins to another entity – as if being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] had the character of a possible entity (Heidegger, 1927, p.5).

This realization undermines his entire phenomenological project devoted to the understanding of the relation between the human being [*Dasein*\*] and **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. The human being is supposed to be the only entity which is able to ask the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. However, asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (asking what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is) is already asking about something other than **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** assumes that there is something (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) that can be questioned. In order to be

something, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has to be an entity, namely that entity which is questioned by the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. However, according to the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, it cannot be that entity which is questioned either. Since the price of referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reification of it and since the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** already refers to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not ask about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but about something else.<sup>13</sup> In Heidegger's words,

as a seeking, questioning needs prior guidance from what it seeks. The meaning of being must already therefore be available to us in a certain way. We intimated that we are always already involved in an understanding of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]. From this grows the explicit question of the meaning of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] and the tendency towards its concept. We do not *know* what 'being' [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] means. But already, when we ask, 'What *is* being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]?' we stand in an understanding of the 'is' without being able to determine conceptually what the 'is' means (Heidegger, 1927, p.4).

At this point, Heidegger is aware that both speaking and thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** leads him to face a contradiction. Indeed, by the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is taken to be not an entity; however, since an entity is everything we can refer to and since we are referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** right now, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has to be an entity as well. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because we refer to it) and not an entity (because, by assumption, it is not). As we have already stated above, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world because the world is the totality of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity; nonetheless, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is part of the world because the world is the totality of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity.

Recently some analytic philosophers have realized that the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as a logical paradox. Adrian Moore, in his *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*, takes Heidegger's philosophy to be one of "the most general attempt[s] of making sense of things" (Moore, 2012, p.1). Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the reason why all

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<sup>13</sup>Following Priest (2006), it is possible to clarify this point and, more generally, the ontological difference running a comparison with Frege. According to Frege, one needs to distinguish between objects (the ontological correlate of names) and concepts (the ontological correlate of predicates). The difference is that concepts are unsaturated (inherently gappy). Frege needs to appeal to this fact to explain unity of propositions. By analogy, we can say that beings (entities) are objects and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is a concept.

entities are, Moore interprets Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the most general attempt of making sense of every thing. The issue is that, according to Moore, "to make sense of things at the highest level of generality (...) is to make sense of things in terms of what it is to make sense of things" (Moore, 2012, p.7). This makes Heidegger's metaphysics self-referential because, not only does he aim to make sense of every entity appealing to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, but he also wants to make sense of what makes sense of every entity, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself. At this point, as it is often the case when self-referentiality is involved, Heidegger faces a paradox. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes sense of every entity. Since, following Moore, Heidegger's metaphysics is the most general attempt of making sense of things, Heidegger legitimately aims to make sense of what makes sense as well; in Heidegger's case, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself. Nonetheless, exactly this self-referential attempt of making sense of what makes sense triggers the problem because, as we have anticipated, in talking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as something that makes sense of everything, we actually refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as that entity which makes sense of everything. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because it is that thing which makes sense of all things) and not (because, according to Heidegger's ontological difference, it is not a thing at all). This is the contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

The logical structure of the antinomy faced by Heidegger clearly emerges in Priest's interpretation. He spells out the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as a denotational paradox: if there is something (let's say  $X$ ) that we cannot denote, then there is something that we cannot refer to. However, don't we denote  $X$  as soon as we claim that  $X$  cannot be denoted? In other words, don't we refer to  $X$  as soon as we claim that we cannot refer to  $X$ ? To make it clearer, let's briefly take into consideration a specific instantiation of the same kind of paradox, namely König's paradox. Such a paradox is about ordinals, which are numbers that extend the familiar counting numbers, 0, 1, 2, ..., beyond the finite. This means that, after all the finite numbers, there is a next,  $\omega$ , and then a next,  $\omega + 1$ , and so on. As it can be shown by a rigorous mathematical proof, there are many more ordinals than can be referred to by names of a language with a finite vocabulary, such as English. Thus, there are ordinals to which we cannot refer. Now, the problem occurs when, for example, we take into consideration the least ordinal number we cannot refer to. However, despite the fact that it should be impossible to refer to the least ordinal, the phrase 'the least ordinal we cannot refer to' does refer to something, namely the least ordinal number. Thus, the paradoxical conclusion is that we cannot refer to the least

ordinal number but, at the same time, we can.

According to Priest (2015), the problem concerning **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is exactly the same. Following Heidegger, every time we refer to something, we refer to an entity. Since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not an entity, it follows that it is impossible to refer to it. However, as in the case of the least ordinal, as soon as we claim that it is impossible to refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, we do, in fact, refer to it. As with König's paradox, we cannot refer to the least ordinal number but, at the same time, we can, so too with Heidegger's paradox in which we cannot refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub> but, at the same time, we can. More formally, such a paradox can be presented in the following way. According to Priest (2015), an intuitively correct principle of denotation is the so-called D-schema: '*a*' denotes *x* iff  $a = x$ . For instance, 'Socrates' denotes Plato's teacher iff Socrates is Plato's teacher. Now, since according to the ontological difference, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> (let's call it *b*) is not an entity,  $\neg\exists x(x = b)$ , it also follows that  $\forall x(x \neq b)$ . If '*n*' is any name,  $n \neq b$ . By the D-schema and contraposition, '*n*' does not denote **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. **Being**<sub>MET</sub> has no name. We cannot refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Nevertheless, at the same time, we can, can't we? Don't we refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub> when we claim that '**Being**<sub>MET</sub> cannot be referred to'? "One cannot say anything about the being [**Being**<sub>MET</sub>] of an object (even though one can!)" (Priest, 2015, p.10).

In both the interpretations discussed above, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is represented as something beyond either the possibility of 'being made sense of' or the possibility of 'being referred to'. According to Moore, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is beyond the limit of human understanding (because it is impossible to make sense of it) while, according to Priest, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is beyond the limit of expression (because it cannot be expressed) and the limit of cognition (because it cannot be thought). Nevertheless, for both Moore and Priest, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is also represented as something that is *not* beyond the possibility of 'being made sense of' or the possibility of 'being referred to' because, as we have seen, we can make sense of and refer to **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is *not* beyond the limit of human understanding (because we can understand it) and it is *not* beyond the limit of expression (because we can express it) or the limit of cognition (because we can think about it).

According to Priest, Heidegger's **Being**<sub>MET</sub> perfectly fits in a broader class of paradoxes, which share the same following structure: "a certain object must be within a fixed totality  $\Omega$  [this is what he calls the 'Closure Condition'], but must also be without it [this is what he calls the 'Transcendental Condition']" (Priest, 2002, p.245). On the one

hand, given Heidegger's metaphysics, the 'Closure Condition' is represented by the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is within the totality of everything that we can make sense of, express or think. On the other hand, the 'Transcendental Condition' is represented by the fact that, assuming the ontological difference, it is impossible to make sense of, express and think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is beyond the boundary of the totality of what is understandable, expressible or thinkable, but, at the same time, it is not.<sup>14</sup>

Another way of expressing this paradoxical situation is the following one: as Plotinus's One and Saint John's God, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is outside the world, namely outside the totality of all entities (because, according to the ontological difference, it is not an entity). In this case, the totality  $\Omega$  is represented by the world (which is characterized by Heidegger as the totality of all entities) and Priest's 'Transcendental Condition' is represented by the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not part of the world. However, overcoming the position of Plotinus and Saint John of the Cross, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is also within the world (because, since everything we refer to is an entity and since we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity too). The fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is within the world (namely within the totality  $\Omega$ ) represents Priest's 'Closure Condition'.

At this point, the aporia of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is clearly stated and Heidegger is perfectly aware that such a contradiction leads his whole metaphysical project to a dead-end. Indeed, the aim of Heidegger's metaphysics is to answer the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and, in order to answer the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is necessary to talk and think about it. However, as we have seen, talking and thinking about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** leads to claiming something contradictory and this makes any attempt of referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** meaningless because any contradictory statement (including the one Heidegger himself claims about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) "offends against the fundamental laws of discourse" (Heidegger, 1966, p.23). According to Heidegger, these fundamental laws are determined by logic, which is defined as "a set of rules" for a good "way of reasoning" (Heidegger, 1998, p.8). Certainly, Heidegger has never directly dealt with formal logic but, for our purpose, it is enough to say that Heidegger thinks that logic is grounded on "two main principles: the principle of

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<sup>14</sup>Priest (2002, p.245) gives also a formal description of the paradox of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** using the Inclosure Schema as follows.  $\phi(y)$  is ' $y$  can be expressed in language', so that  $\Omega$  is the totality of things that can be expressed;  $\psi(x)$  is ' $x = \Omega$ ';  $\delta(\Omega)$  is a claim about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, say that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what it is that makes entities be. Then, by Heidegger's arguments, we have  $\neg\phi(\delta(\Omega))$ : this fact about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be expressed; but Heidegger himself shows that  $\phi(\delta(\Omega))$  by expressing this fact.

non-contradiction and the law of identity” (Heidegger, 1998, p.9).<sup>15</sup> During a conference in Freiburg, Heidegger also added the law of excluded middle (cf. Heidegger, 1994). Nevertheless, among these three laws, Heidegger takes the principle of non-contradiction as the “fundamental law” (Heidegger, 1966, p.9) that is meant to establish which thoughts are meaningful and which are not. Thus, not only is it generally the case that “who ever speaks against logic is suspected, explicitly or implicitly, of arbitrariness” but, more specifically, “this suspicious counts as an argument and as an objection” because “contradictory propositions always offend the fundamental rule of any possible discourse” (Heidegger, 1966, p.112). To conclude, since “logic [grounded on the the principle of non-contradiction] is taken as the tribunal, secure for all eternity” and since “no rational human being will call into doubt its authority as the first and the last court of appeal” (Heidegger, 1966, p.113), **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, as the whole Heideggerian metaphysics, “is contradictory and, thus, senseless” (Heidegger, 1966, p.113).

Since Heidegger does not want to give up any of his metaphysical premises and since he endorses the account of logic previously discussed, he coherently concludes that speaking and thinking about **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is impossible. The only available option is to be silent about **Being**<sub>MET</sub> because “metaphysical conceptions forbid thinking about the question of the essence of being [**Being**<sub>MET</sub>]” (Heidegger, 1959, p.73). Metaphysics finds in the question of **Being**<sub>MET</sub> its end point, its extreme limit. **Being**<sub>MET</sub> remains inaccessible for any metaphysical discourse. As Heidegger poetically writes: “The fog of the world can never reach the light of being [**Being**<sub>MET</sub>]” (Heidegger, 1954, p.49). The light of **Being**<sub>MET</sub> remains unfathomable. Tragically, Heidegger faces the evidence that his whole phenomenological project is self-defeating because he tries to speak and think about what is explicitly established as unspeakable and unthinkable. Then, Heidegger resigned from his philosophical enterprise and, at least until the well-known methodological turn of his thought, he decided to remain silent about **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Such a turn is called the *Kehre*\* and it took place around the thirties.

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<sup>15</sup>Even though Heidegger is not completely familiar with formal logic, he was fascinated by this subject. First of all, before starting his studies in theology and philosophy, he dreamt of becoming a mathematician (cf. Safranski, 1998). Secondly, right after his doctoral studies, Heidegger briefly engaged with formal logic commenting on Frege’s work (see Heidegger, 2007). For more details about the relation between Heidegger and mathematics (or logic), see Roubach (2008).

### 2.3 Beyng<sub>MET</sub>

As we have seen, according to Heidegger, both the aporia of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the relative impossibility to make sense of it are based on two main assumptions. [1] On the one hand, Heidegger believes that the ‘*objectifying*’ nature of any intentional activity forbids us to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as what simply is not an entity. Indeed, given the assumption that every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, when we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not an entity, we treat **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as an entity as well. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not. [2] On the other hand, Heidegger takes the principle of non-contradiction as the most fundamental rule of thought and, from this second assumption, it follows that any attempt of referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, in virtue of its contradictory nature, has to belong to the realm of non-sense.

For the whole trajectory of Heidegger’s thought, the first assumption was never challenged. Indeed, in the *Appendix of Phenomenology and Theology* published in 1964, Heidegger claims that “every kind of language [or, more generally, every kind of intentional activity] necessarily *objectifies*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.28). What about the second assumption, then? Has Heidegger ever thought to abandon the principle of non-contradiction? Has he ever considered the possibility of giving up the logic? According to the standard interpretation, the answer is negative. Priest is even surprised about the fact that Heidegger has never tried to criticize the principle of non-contradiction. “It is an irony that a thinker of the acuity of Heidegger, who was so critical in his historical heritage, should have been blind to the possibility that people had got logic wrong” (Priest, 2002, p.248). In what follows, we disagree with this interpretation. We show that, after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, Heidegger challenged the principle of non-contradiction, endorsing *dialetheism*, namely the position according to which some contradictions are true.<sup>16</sup>

In *What is metaphysics?* (1967), Heidegger starts to cast some doubts on the principle of non-contradiction. “This [impossibility of referring to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is true starting from the assumption that Logic is the most important thing. (...) However, can the

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<sup>16</sup>Following Priest and Berto (2013), we take *dialetheism* to be the view according to which there are *dialethias*. A *dialethia* is a sentence,  $A$ , such that both it and its negation,  $\neg A$ , are true. In our case, we will show that Heidegger endorses dialetheism, accepting as true (as a *dialethia*) that (A) ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and ( $\neg A$ ) ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’. For a short introduction to *dialetheism*, see also Priest (2006, pp.4-6) and Priest (2014a, pp. xiv-xvi). For a completely detailed account of *dialethesim*, see Priest (2010).

supremacy of Logic be harmed?" (Heidegger, 1967, p.63). The complete and clear realization that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** requires us to abandon the principle of non-contradiction was not formulated immediately after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup> and it was developed in years of both private and public philosophical attempts. The first essay in which Heidegger seems to endorse a *dialethic* solution to the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** – accepting its contradictory nature – is contained in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. He writes:

The word ‘being’ [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is indeterminate and (...) and nevertheless we always understand it as determine. Following logic, this is a contradiction and what is contradictory cannot be real. Nevertheless, this contradiction - being completely indeterminate and determinate - is real (Heidegger, 1966, p.88).

On the one hand, Heidegger suggests that the word ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’ refers to something that does not have any determination (something about which nothing can be either said or thought because there are no determinations to be said or thought about it). On the other hand, he also claims that the word ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>**’ refers to something that has some determinations (something about which it can be said or thought, at least, the determination of not having any determinations). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is indeterminate (it has no determinations at all) and it is determinate (it has the determination of not having any determination at all). Most importantly, Heidegger also suggests that such a contradiction is real. The contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is unavoidable and it has to be accepted as true: according to Heidegger, as a matter of fact, such a contradiction is part of how reality is, as all the other real things. At this point, it follows that, since there is, at least, one *real* contradiction, Heidegger must give up the idea that contradictions are always meaningless and, thus, impossible to accept. Nevertheless, even though Heidegger seems to give up the principle of non-contradiction accepting the contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as true, this idea is not consistently presented throughout the whole extent of his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Besides the paragraph taken into consideration here, there are no other significant metaphysical explanations.

Some years after the publication of *Introduction to Metaphysics*, the dialethic solution to the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** was systematically presented in the *Contributions to Philosophy* – a philosophical diary written between 1937 and 1938 but published only after Heidegger’s death.<sup>17</sup> In this posthumous work, Heidegger presents a full defense of

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<sup>17</sup>For a general overview of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, see Schoenbohm (2001), Schmidt (2001)

the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** should be taken to be both an entity and not an entity. In order to stretch the difference between his old consistent account of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the new inconsistent one, he starts to write being [*Sein*] (what we have called **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) as beyng [*Seyn*]. Following Heidegger, in discussing his dialethic position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, we start writing **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too.

In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger claims that metaphysics needs “a new beginning” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.3) and this new beginning is represented by the introduction of the ‘event’ (or the ‘*Ereignis*\*’) which is “the idea that needs to be thought as the essential discourse of the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.96). In this framework, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has to be understood as what is true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. This is the reason why Heidegger also describes the ‘event’ as the human being’s appropriation [*Er-eignung*] of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. The event itself “is the thought that reaches beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.96). Since the ‘event’ is constituted by the human being’s appropriation of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, then the event itself is always described as “the *space-time* ground of the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.47). If the event is the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, and the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the human being’s appropriation of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, then, since the human being occupies both a space and a temporal region of the world, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is spatiotemporally given as well.

At this point, even though the contradictory nature of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has not been explicitly accepted yet, a dialethic solution is definitely implied by this ontological account. According to the metaphysical premises of Heidegger (premises that are certainly not rejected in the *Contribution of Philosophy*), thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or, more generally, referring to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) leads to a contradiction. Now, claiming that the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the ‘event’, and that the ‘event’ is the human being thinking a true thought about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, seems to suggest that the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** precisely consists in thinking something contradictory and true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself. This position becomes immediately clear when Heidegger starts to describe the real content of the ‘event’, namely the content of the thought that thinks **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. He metaphorically claims: “*Dasein*\* not only thinks about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entities as two opposite sides of a river but he also thinks about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entities as the

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and McNeill (2001).

same side of the river” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.47). Not only is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** held as the complete opposite of entities (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is meant not to be an entity at all), but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also held as something that is not the opposite of entities (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well). This is the reason why, even though the ontological difference still holds, ensuring the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, Heidegger thinks that, “[as] an entity *is*, beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] *is*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.58). In other terms, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** makes entities entities and since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity itself, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, otherwise it would be an entity. Nevertheless, in *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger thinks that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** *is* as well and, as such, it is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too. This is exactly the contradiction that, in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, is taken as true.

In paragraph number 47 entitled ‘The essence of the decision: beyng or not-beyng’, Heidegger directly challenges the necessity of choosing between the **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** that *is* not (an entity) and the **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** that *is* (an entity). Heidegger wants to question exactly this ultimatum (this *aut-aut*): he wants to question the idea that it is necessary to choose only one of the two options in question because choosing both would mean to claim something contradictory and, thus, senseless. He provocatively asks: “Where does this *aut-aut* come from? Where does the *aut-aut* between ‘only this’ or ‘only that’ come from? (...) Is there maybe a third possible way?” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). One paragraph later, Heidegger answers that the third possible way is to avoid the *aut-aut* claiming that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity. As Heidegger himself writes, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is “the beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] of what is not” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). Now, according to the principle of non-contradiction, and given that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground that makes all entities entities, then *either* what is not an entity is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** *or* what is an entity is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Nonetheless, Heidegger suggests that it is also the case that something that is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself) is, at the same time, grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, what the human being realizes is that, according to the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**; however, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too. It also follows that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** makes entities entities, even what is not an entity (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is an entity too. The truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is an entity and not. Heidegger summarizes this idea in the

following way:

as ‘beyng’ [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] does not simply mean ‘being present there’, ‘not-beyng’ [‘not-**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**’] does not simply mean ‘completely disappearing’ because ‘not-beyng’ is a mode of ‘beyng’. This holds for beyng itself which is an entity and, at the same, it is not. It is affected by the lack of beyng [because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] but, nevertheless, *is* [because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too]. (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121).

According to Heidegger, the principle of non-contradiction generates this *aut-aut*, which forces the human being to choose between two options: either **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Nevertheless, according to the truth expressed in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, the human being realizes that this ultimatum needs to be overcome. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is “nothing more than both these two options together” which are one the negation of the other (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). Thus, “beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] *is* what is not” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.58).

The contradiction expressed in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> is metaphorically described by Heidegger as an ‘oscillation’ [*Erzitterung*<sup>\*</sup>] between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, which is generated by the human being that thinks about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, through the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is held as what is not an entity – this is the first extreme of the oscillation. However, as we have already discussed, the thought that refers to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as what is not an entity, refers to something. Thus, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is held as an entity too – this is the second extreme of the oscillation. In the first chapter of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger defines this oscillation as the “essence of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.34). According to Heidegger himself, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not simply one of the two extremes of the oscillation but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is, metaphorically speaking, the oscillation itself: it is both the two extremes together.

The interpretation according to which the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is a contradiction, which requires us to overcome the principle of non-contradiction, is supported in other parts of the *Contributions to Philosophy*. Heidegger is definitely clear about the necessity of abandoning ‘logic’: “the biggest misconception of the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] consists in a logic of philosophy” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.114) because “beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is beyond logic” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.114). **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** needs to be “illogical” or “a-logical” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.114). At this point, the majority of the interpreters have

thought that Heidegger is suggesting abandoning any philosophical enterprise concerning **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**: from this point of view, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not something that can be rationally understood but it must be only mystically experienced. For instance, according to Caputo, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** “is without a why; it is the renunciation of concepts and representations, of propositions and ratiocinations” (Caputo, 1986, p.191). For this reason, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be the subject matter of a philosophical argument or a rational investigation. However, if we carefully read Heidegger, we see that this is not true. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, there is no trace of a mystical revelation: neither the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** nor the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> are the result of some irrational epiphany. On the contrary, Heidegger himself points out that being ‘illogical’ or ‘a-logical’ does not mean rejecting logic *tout court*, but it means rejecting that specific ‘way of thinking’ grounded on the principles of non-contradiction, identity, and the law of excluded middle. More accurately, Heidegger clarifies that what should be abandoned in ‘logic’ is what we have already defined as the fundamental law, namely the principle of non-contradiction. Indeed, even though such a principle claims that all contradictions need to be rejected, according to Heidegger, the contradiction stating that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not needs to be taken as true. From here, it does not follow that, because of this contradiction, both philosophy and any rational discourse about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** need to be abandoned; it simply follows that it is not possible to reject the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because it is contradictory. As Heidegger writes:

An entity is. Beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is. With the word ‘entity’, we do not simply refer to what is real, interpreted as what is ‘present’ as an entity of the mind or as a concrete object (...), but we also refer to what is not an entity as well [namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]. However, if someone immediately finds here a contradiction because ‘what is not’ cannot be an entity, and if someone takes consistency as the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**], does not think deep enough (Heidegger, 1989a, p.97).

The *Contributions to Philosophy* is not the only work where Heidegger supports a dialetheic solution to the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Twenty years after the final draft of the *Contributions to Philosophy*, in *Identity and Difference* (1957a), Heidegger defends the same idea. However, he abandons the metaphor of the ‘vibration’ and he adopts the metaphor of the ‘circular movement’. Here Heidegger explicitly links the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> with the ontological difference, which is now named ‘separation’ [*Austrag*], namely the

separation between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities. He claims that, according to the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, “the separation is a constant circular movement [*win Kreisen*]”. On the one hand, the ‘vibration’ was a metaphorical representation of the conceptual movement between the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (because of the ontological difference) and the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because we refer to it stating the ontological difference). On the other hand, the ‘circular movement’ is another metaphorical representation of the fact that, as soon as we discuss the ‘separation’ between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** turns out not to be separated from the entities at all. This is because we refer to it exactly in saying that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is separated from them. Such a movement is circular because, starting from the assumption that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, we end up concluding that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is indeed an entity. However, since we do not give up the assumption that there is a ‘difference’ or a ‘separation’ between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and entities, we go back in claiming that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Nevertheless, once again, in stating that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, we turn **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** into an entity. As when running in a circle, we always end up back in the place where we began. Exactly this “perpetual chasing of being [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entity” is the reason why “being [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is disclosed as something that *is too*” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.14).

Against the interpretation presented here, someone can object that this ‘vibration’ or this ‘oscillation’ does not constitute a real contradiction because it does not seem to imply that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity *at the same time*.<sup>18</sup> Such a ‘vibration’ or ‘oscillation’ can be given in time and, of course, this would make the contradiction disappear because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** would be not an entity (let’s say at time  $t_1$ ) and an entity (let’s say at time  $t_2$ ), but not together in the same instant of time. However, this is not the case. First of all, this idea cannot be the one endorsed by Heidegger himself, otherwise there would be no reason, for Heidegger, to accept the contradiction of the event of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Secondly, as Heidegger himself states in his *Contributions to Philosophy* and in a seminar about Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, Heidegger does not endorse any kind of Hegelian dialectic where there is the *Aufheben* of the contradiction – a ‘(dis-)solution’ of the contradiction.<sup>19</sup> On the contrary, Heidegger thinks that the two moments of the

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<sup>18</sup>This objection was suggested by Mel Fitting and Stewart Shapiro in private conversation. I thank them for making me think about this point.

<sup>19</sup>As we have specified in footnote number 3 about Aristotle, also in this case, it is important to point out that this is Heidegger’s interpretation of Hegel and not necessarily what Hegel really claims. Some contemporary interpreters think that Hegel’s dialectic removes contradictions (see Berto (2005)

‘vibration’ or ‘oscillation’, namely the fact that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ (because of the ontological difference) and the fact that ‘**Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ (because we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) are not given in time. He writes that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is “situated in the instant [*Augenblick*\*] of the fight between either being [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] or not-being [not-**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, namely entity]” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.57).

It is also important to remark that, as we have previously mentioned, in *Identity and Difference* (1957a), Heidegger also claims that all entities are in virtue of the fact that “each entity is itself” (Heidegger, 1957a, p.28). This means that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (interpreted as *being self-identical*) still determines entities as entities because all entities are entities *in virtue of* the fact that they are exactly what they are. Any entity is that specific and unique entity that is: the reason for an entity to be an entity is its *being identical to itself*. However, from this characterization of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, it also follows that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical and not. In other terms, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not only contradictory because it has contradictory properties (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and it is not an entity) but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also both self-identical (because all entities are self-identical) and not self-identical (because what is not an entity is not self-identical). In the *Ereignis*\*, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not. Moreover, if we interpret **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as *being self-identical*, then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both self-identical and not self-identical as well.

To conclude, Heidegger endorses the position according to which there are true contradictions in his *History of Being* (1998b) too. Here Heidegger claims that a contradiction does not always show that an argument is wrong and fallacious. He suggests the idea that a contradictory conclusion is not enough to reject an argument because “a contradiction is not a rebuttal nor a disproof” (Heidegger, 1998b, p.15). Moreover, since a contradiction “is not always meant to be false, incorrect or unacceptable” (Heidegger, 1998b, p.13), it is possible to have contradictions that are not only unavoidable but also true. As we have seen, an example is the *Ereignis*\*, which shows that “the contradiction is essentially a fundamental proposition about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and its truth” (Heidegger, 1998b, p.13). What is true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is an entity and, at the same time, it is not an entity. Finally, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is interpreted as *being self-identical*, then it is also true that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical and not self-identical as well.<sup>20</sup>

and Redding (2007)), while some other interpreters think that Hegel’s dialectic accepts and tolerates contradictions (see Priest (2010)). Heidegger seems to agree with the first interpreters.

<sup>20</sup>It may be relevant to specify that the only inconsistency accepted by Heidegger is the inconsis-

## 2.4 *Nicht*

Given the metaphysical framework presented in his *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger intuitively understands that the concept of negation plays a crucial role in the paradoxical truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Since all contradictions are the conjunction of a statement ( $A$ ) and its negation ( $\neg A$ ), the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an exception. Indeed, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the event of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, it is the case that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ ( $A$ ) and, at the same time, it is the case that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ ( $\neg A$ ). So, in order to make sense of this antinomy, it is important to understand how negation works. Following Heidegger himself, the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is generally not accepted exactly because “only few people can really understand the meaning of negation” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). In particular, he points out that negation is generally (mis-)interpreted in two main ways: either it is understood as “cancellation, dissolution” or it is understood as “rejection” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). Nevertheless, even though Heidegger clearly suggests that both these two accounts of negation turn the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** into something unacceptable, he does not give any argument. In what follows, we will try to make sense of this intuition.

Let’s start examining the first misunderstanding of negation. In this case, the content of a proposition expressed by  $\neg A$  ‘cancels’ or ‘dissolves’ the content of the proposition expressed by  $A$ . Similarly, since the relation is symmetrical, the content of a proposition expressed by  $A$  ‘cancels’ or ‘dissolves’ the content of the proposition expressed by  $\neg A$  as well. From here, it follows that, since  $A$  dissolves the content of  $\neg A$  and since  $\neg A$  dissolves the content of  $A$ , the contradiction ( $A \wedge \neg A$ ) has no content at all. According to this account of negation, contradictions are contentless: they simply lack any content.<sup>21</sup>

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tency of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1966), he also mentions the square triangle. Nevertheless, it is difficult to establish if Heidegger takes the square triangle to be *genuinely* and *truly* inconsistent, as he does in the case of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

<sup>21</sup>It may look unreasonable that Heidegger refers to such a technical notion of negation. However, since he has deeply engaged with philosophers that have supported an account of negation as cancellation, this is not the case. In particular, Aristotle (which was deeply studied by Heidegger) endorsed this first account of negation. Even though it is fair to point out that this interpretation of Aristotle is not universally accepted, there is reasonable evidence according to which, not only did Aristotle assume this account of negation, but he also accepted the so-called Aristotle’s thesis, namely  $\neg(A \rightarrow \neg A)$  (cf. Routley and Routley, 1984).

Moreover, consistent with the idea that contradictions are without any content, the conjunction of  $A$  and  $\neg A$  neither entails  $A$  nor entails  $\neg A$ . *Ex contradictione nihil sequitur*.

At this point, it should be clear why this account of negation cannot be the correct one to express the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. First of all, according to Heidegger, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, is exactly the realization that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Given this first account of negation, the *Ereignis* (namely the conjunction of the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and its negation) needs to be contentless because the content of the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ cancels or dissolves the content of the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ and *vice versa*. However, according to Heidegger, this contradiction is not contentless at all; on the contrary, exactly because of its contradictory content (namely that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not), it represents the unavoidable truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Secondly, Heidegger thinks that the contradiction which states that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and, at the same time, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ entails that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’. This is particularly evident when he talks about the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>. From the ‘event’ of the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, which is exactly the conjunction of a statement and its negation, Heidegger often infers one of the two conjuncts. For instance, in his *Contribution to Philosophy*, Heidegger claims that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is contradictory (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity), then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1989a, p.98). *Vice versa*, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is contradictory (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity), then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1989a, p.98). Working with such an account of negation, this would not be possible.<sup>22</sup>

The second misunderstanding treats negation as a ‘rejection’. In this second case, the content of a negated proposition neither disappears nor it is cancelled, but, using Heidegger’s words, it “is simply ruled out” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). This means that

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<sup>22</sup>It may be interesting to recall that negation, interpreted as ‘cancellation’ and ‘dissolution’, naturally leads towards connexive logic or, more generally, connexivism. This view is known for endorsing the following two theses. [1] First of all, explicit contradictions do not entail their components. [2] Secondly,  $A$  cannot entail  $\neg A$ . This second thesis emerges naturally under the cancellation or dissolution view of negation, as follows: entailment is inclusion of logical content. So, if  $A$  were to entail  $\neg A$ , it would include as part of its content, what ‘cancels’ or ‘dissolves’ it,  $\neg A$ , in which event it would entail nothing, having no content. Finally, since it is not the case that  $A$  entails  $\neg A$ , Aristotle’s thesis, namely  $\neg(A \rightarrow \neg A)$ , holds as well.

the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ *rejects* the statement ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’. The two propositions are, so to speak, incompatible: since the former statement rejects the latter one, it is impossible that they both hold. In his literary style, Heidegger also claims that “this [second kind of] negation says only *no*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.189). One possible way of interpreting such an enigmatic expression is that, if it is true that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’, the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’ needs to be negative. *Vice versa*, if it is false that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’, the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’ needs to be positive. Given this preliminary intuition, it is possible to see how this characterization of negation can resemble the behavior of negation in classical logic. Indeed, the fact that proposition  $A$  rejects  $\neg A$  may be also interpreted in the following way: if proposition  $A$  is true,  $\neg A$  is false. *Vice versa*, the fact that proposition  $\neg A$  rejects  $A$ , may be interpreted in the following way: if proposition  $\neg A$  is true,  $A$  is false. Thus, if it is true that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’, ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is false *only*. *Vice versa*, if it is true that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’, ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ is false *only*. It should be immediately evident that this second kind of negation cannot be the right one to express the *Ereignis*\* because Heidegger himself wants to claim that both the propositions ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and its negation are true. This is what negation as ‘rejection’ does not allow.

So, what is a possible account of negation that can make sense of the *Ereignis*\*? Heidegger thinks that, at least in some cases, negation should both ‘accept’ and ‘reject’ what it negates. In this way, the proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ neither cancels, dissolves the content of the proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ nor rejects the possibility that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’. In his words, “[negation] should say *yes* and *no* at the same time” (Heidegger, 1989a, p. 189). Once again, it is possible to interpret this obscure quotation in the following way. On the one hand, since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ is true (because we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ) and since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ is false (because of the ontological difference), the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ true?’ needs to be both *yes* and *no*. *Vice versa*, since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is true (because of the ontological difference) and since the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is false (because we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ), the answer to the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’ needs to be both *yes* and *no*. Following Heidegger, only this negation can express

the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** exactly because it is “the simultaneity of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and entities” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.42). Since, in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not, this third kind of negation is able to express that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and its negation are both true and false. On the other hand, this negation says *yes* and *no* because, according to Heidegger himself, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> (namely, the contradiction which states that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’) entails both its conjuncts, namely it entails that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity’ and it entails that ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’. Metaphorically, such a negation expresses that, *yes*, it is the case that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and, at the same time, that, *no*, it is not the case that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity.

The recent development of paraconsistent logic can give us a better understanding of this intuitive account of negation. Consider Priest’s *Logic of Paradox* (1979; from now on, *LP*). In this formal system, the classes of true propositions and false propositions overlap. Given a proposition  $A$ , which belongs to the class of true propositions only, the negation of  $A$  belongs to the class of false propositions only. *Vice versa*, given a proposition  $A$ , which belongs to the class of false propositions only, the negation of  $A$  belongs to the class of true propositions only. However, given a sentence  $A$ , which belongs to the overlap of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions, the negation of  $A$  belongs to the overlap as well. So, not only is proposition  $A$  both true and false, but its negation (namely,  $\neg A$ ) is true and false as well. As for Heidegger’s negation, the negation in *LP* says ‘yes’ and ‘no’: if proposition  $A$  and its negation belong to the overlap of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions, the answer to the question ‘is  $A$  true?’ is ‘yes’ (because it belongs to the class of true propositions), and ‘no’ (because it belongs to the class of false propositions). In the same way, since the negation of  $A$  belongs to the overlap of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions, the answer to the question ‘is  $\neg A$  true?’ is ‘yes’ (because it belongs to the class of true propositions), and ‘no’ (because it belongs to the class of false propositions).

As we have already discussed, according to Heidegger’s metaphysics, the proposition expressing the ontological difference (namely, ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’) belongs exactly to the intersection of the class of true propositions with the class of false propositions. ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is true (because it is assumed as such by Heidegger himself) and it is false (because, since we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has to be an entity). In this case, the negation of this proposition belongs to the overlap of the two

classes as well because it is both true and false. In other terms, if we ask the question ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ true?’, the answer is both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. It is ‘yes’ because, assuming the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and it is ‘no’ because, in virtue of the fact that we refer to it, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well. On the other hand, if we ask ‘is the sentence ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ false?’, the answer is again both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. It is ‘yes’ because, in virtue of the fact that we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and it is ‘no’ because, assuming the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity at all.

## 2.5 Ἀλεθρία

Grounded on this last interpretation of negation, Heidegger gives also an account of truth, which is compatible with a dialethic solution to the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In his *On the Essence of Truth* (1967), Heidegger claims that “truth means what makes a true thing true” (Heidegger, 1967, p.134). However, following Heidegger, there are two understandings of truth: the first one is the traditional concept and the second one is his own. The traditional concept supports the idea that a proposition is true if and only if there is an ‘accordance’ between what is stated by a proposition and the entity the proposition is about. Thus, consistently with a vast part of the philosophical tradition, truth (Heidegger uses the latin expression ‘*veritas*’) is taken to be the agreement of our thoughts with the entity that is thought (*adaequatio intellectus ad rem*) or the concordance (here, Heidegger uses the Aristotelian Greek expression *ὁμοίωσις*) of an assertion (*λόγος*) with an entity (*πᾶγμα*). In Heidegger’s words, something is true when “the matter is in accord [*Die Sache stimmt*] with what actually is” (Heidegger, 1988, p.136). For instance, the proposition ‘snow is white’ is true if and only if snow is white. Thus, “the truth is the actual” (Heidegger, 1967, p.134) or, more precisely, a proposition is true if and only if it is in accordance with the actual. This is the reason why, according to Heidegger himself, truth is a synonym of correctness because it is about a proposition being correct in representing reality as it is. Using Heidegger’s metaphor, truth is the agreement [*Ubereinstimmen*] between what appears ‘under the light’ and a proposition that correctly (and, thus, truthfully) describes what appears ‘under the light’. Here, what is ‘under the light’ is taken to be the thing (*res*) a proposition is about, or the entity (*πᾶγμα*) an assertion (*λόγος*) is concerned with. Such an account of truth is the ground

of that specific way of reasoning which is labelled by Heidegger himself as ‘*apophantic*’, namely that specific way of reasoning which is concerned with what appears ‘under’ (*apo* - *apo*) the ‘light’ (*phainos* - *φαινος*).<sup>23</sup>

Given this traditional understanding of truth, Heidegger explicitly equates falsity with *un-truth*, namely what is not true. If truth is the agreement of a proposition with reality, “the untruth of the matter signifies the non-agreement [of a proposition with reality]”; if truth is the accordance with the actual, “the untruth is conceived as a non-accordance [with the actual]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138). If the truth is the agreement of a proposition with what appears ‘under the light’, the untruth is the disagreement of a proposition with what appears ‘under the light’. Metaphorically, untruth is concerned with “what is hidden” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138) or “concealed” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138). Moreover, Heidegger also thinks that, according to this account, truth and untruth are, as in classical logic, exclusive and exhaustive. If the actual is the truth, then “what is not actual [namely, the untruth] is always taken to be the opposite of the actual [namely, the truth]” (Heidegger 1967, p.138). For instance, if the proposition ‘*X* is golden’ is true, this means that *X* is actually golden. In reality, *X* is golden. Using Heidegger’s metaphor, the proposition ‘*X* is golden’ is true if and only if *X* appears ‘under the light’ as golden, namely if and only if the entity *X* appears in reality to have the property of *being golden*. Consistently with the traditional concept of truth, this also means that if *X* is indeed golden, the negation of the proposition ‘*X* is golden’ is false (or untrue). “Untruth (...) is completely the opposite of truth” (Heidegger, 1967, p.138). No proposition can be true and false (or untrue) at the same time. Truth and falsity (or untruth) are incompatible. It is clear that this account of truth is grounded on the second kind of negation because, consistently with the idea that truth and falsity (or untruth) are exclusive and exhaustive,

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<sup>23</sup>According to Heidegger, the Western tradition has exclusively developed the *apophantic* way of reasoning, which grounds both scientific and technical knowledge. During a conference given in Freiburg (2002), he points out that all the different branches of science work under the assumption that everything is an entity only. For instance, biology is concerned with living entities, theology is concerned with divine entities and mathematics is concerned with mathematical entities. However, all of them are, ultimately, about entities. In his lectures on Nietzsche (1961), Heidegger also claims that the *apophantic* way of reasoning grounds the ‘will to power’ of *Dasein*\* because it is possible to have power only at one condition, namely that there is something (an entity) on which it is possible to have power. As it is claimed in *The question concerning technology* (1957b, pp.5-28), technology is the strongest and most powerful form of the will to power because it is grounded on that *apophantic* way of reasoning that, considering only entities, develops the possibility of having power over them.

the negation of a true proposition must be false and the negation of a false proposition must be true.

Unfortunately, there is a problem: Heidegger's metaphysics is incompatible with this account of truth. First of all, according to Heidegger before the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, in the case of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, there is no entity according to which a proposition can be in agreement with because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity in the first place. There cannot be a truth about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**: it is impossible to be correct about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because there is no entity to be correct about. Using Heidegger's metaphor, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot appear 'under the light'. If **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot appear 'under the light', no proposition can be in accordance with **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** either: indeed, a proposition can be in accordance only with what appears 'under the light', namely with what is an entity. Therefore, since a proposition is true if and only if it is in accordance with what appears 'under the light', there cannot be any true proposition about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Secondly, even when, after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, Heidegger endorses the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the idea that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not entity, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> itself becomes incompatible with this account of truth. Indeed, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not, it is both true and false that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. However, since according to the traditional understanding, truth and falsity (or untruth) are exclusive and exhaustive, this is unacceptable because it would imply that at least a proposition (namely 'Beyng<sub>MET</sub> is not an object') is both true and false.

At this point, Heidegger tries to revise this notion of truth introducing what, in ancient Greek, was called *Aletheia* (Ἀλεθεία). This new account of "the question of the essence of truth arises from the question of the truth of essence" (Heidegger, 1967, p.155), namely the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Even though *Aletheia* is usually translated with 'truth', Heidegger, following a philological reading, interprets *Aletheia* as 'what is not hidden'. So, truth is still about the accordance between a proposition and reality (or what is actual); however, this time, truth is not simply characterized as the accordance between a proposition and what appears 'under the light' but it is defined as the accordance between a proposition and 'what is not hidden'. As we will see, here, negation (the 'not' employed in 'what is *not* hidden) plays a crucial role.

As we have already seen, according to Heidegger, reality is not only constituted by what appears, *sic et simpliciter*, 'under the light': the world (namely the totality of all entities) is not only composed by entities (*πράγματα*). There is something hidden, which

needs to be unconcealed; something that, even if it does not belong to the world, lies under it as a necessary condition for anything to be. This is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden because it is not an entity and, thus, it cannot appear ‘under the light’; at the same time, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden as well because, in the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, it appears ‘under the light’ as that entity that is not an entity. On the one hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be something that simply appears ‘under the light’ because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity: **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** cannot appear ‘*under the light*’ because there is no entity that can appear (there is no entity that can actually be ‘*under the light*’). On the other hand, according to the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is also an entity and, as all the other entities, it is part of the world. Since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself can appear ‘*under the light*’. The truth of the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** appears and does not appear ‘*under the light*’ (namely the truth of the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden and not hidden) directly follows from the structure of the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>. In an idiosyncratic way, Heidegger writes:

the event of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**], namely the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, supports the truth = the truth is shown through the event [the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>] of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]. (...) The preliminary question about the truth is, at the same time, the fundamental question about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]. Beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**], in its own event [the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>], is essentially the truth (Heidegger, 1989a, p.341).<sup>24</sup>

As we have already seen, the event of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is a ‘vibration’ or an ‘oscillation’ of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself between its ‘being an entity’ and its ‘not being an entity’. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is what is not: it is that entity that is not an entity. Therefore, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and it is not an entity. From the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, it follows that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not appear at all because there is no entity that can appear; from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, it follows that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** appears as an entity, namely as that entity that is not an entity. When **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, it cannot appear), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden as well (because it is an entity and, as such, it appears too). *Vice versa*, when **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and, as such, it appears), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**

<sup>24</sup>The relation between the event and Heidegger’s account truth is better explained in the following quotation: “the event grounds the truth; the truth is given only through the event” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.341). Also, “The essence of truth is the *being true* of Beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]”, which the the event. (Heidegger, 1989a, p.343).

is hidden as well (because it is not an entity and, as such, it cannot appear). The truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, namely the event according to which **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not, is that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is covered and, at the same time, uncovered. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden and, at the same time, not. As Heidegger claims, the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** “veils and, at the same time, unveils” **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (Heidegger, 1967, p.149).

Now, as we have seen, Heidegger believes that a proposition is true if it is in accordance with what is *not hidden* (or with what is *uncovered*) and that a proposition is false if it is in accordance with what is *hidden* (or with what is *covered*). It follows that, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is *not hidden* or *uncovered* (because it is an entity and, as such, it appears ‘under the light’) and since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is *hidden* or *covered* (because it is not an entity and, as such, it does not appear ‘under the light’), a proposition such as the ontological difference (‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’) is both true (because it is in accordance with what is not hidden or uncovered) and false (because it is in accordance with what is hidden or covered). Heidegger is explicit about this: “the truth is *non-truth* [or the un-truth]. (...) The truth is, at the same time, the *un-truth*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.340).

Abandoning the Heideggerian metaphor, it is easy to see how *Aletheia* works if we consider the ontological difference. According to Heidegger, the ontological difference, namely ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’, is true. However, since we refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** in saying that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and since everything we refer to in an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well. Moreover, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, the ontological difference is false. Thus, the ontological difference is true and false. In other words, the truth of the ontological difference is its un-truth (cf. Heidegger, 1989a, p. 324) because what is true about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is not an entity) is false as well.

Heidegger is aware that this new account of truth looks “like a dragging up of forcibly contrived paradoxes” (Heidegger, 1967, p.149). As **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden and not hidden at the same time, the ontological difference is true and false at the same time. However, it is also the case that this understanding of truth (*Aletheia*) has to be rejected only by people that endorse the two wrong accounts of negation previously discussed. In Heidegger’s words:

[such an account of truth,] paradoxical only for ordinary *doxa* (opinion), is to be renounced. But surely for those who know about such matters, the ‘non-’ of the

primordial non-essence of truth, as untruth, points to the still unexperienced domain of the truth of Being (not merely of beings) (Heidegger, 1967, p.149).

One possible interpretation of this passage is the following: Heidegger seems to suggest that his account of truth (*Aletheia*) needs to be neglected if and only if we work with the two wrong understandings of negation previously discussed, which, according to Heidegger himself, are wrong. First of all, as we have already seen, these two understandings of negation would either cancel out the content of a contradiction or forbid us to accept contradictions *tout court*. This idea is incompatible with Heidegger's account of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Secondly, according to the two common understandings of negation, truth and falsity are exclusive and exhaustive and, of course, this is not compatible with Heidegger's *Aletheia*, where there are propositions (such as the ontological difference) which are both true and false.

Heidegger himself is explicit in pointing out that the crucial step in accepting *Aletheia* as the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** consists in adopting the third account of negation. On the one hand, the negation contained in *A-letheia*, namely the negation contained in 'what is *not* hidden', should not be interpreted as 'cancellation' or 'dissolution' because Heidegger wants to hold the position according to which it is true that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is hidden (because it is not an entity and, thus, it cannot appear as such) and not hidden (because it is an entity and, thus, it appears as such). According to the negation understood as 'cancellation' or 'dissolution', this contradiction has no content at all. Nevertheless, as we have seen before, Heidegger holds the view that exactly the content of this contradiction is true. Secondly, the negation used in *A-letheia* (namely in 'what is *not* hidden') cannot be interpreted as 'rejection' either because, on the contrary of what classical negation would allow, from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden, Heidegger does not want to infer that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not hidden *only* and, *vice versa*, from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden, Heidegger does not want to infer that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is hidden *only*. Once again, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> is that *conicidentia oppositorum* of 'being hidden' and 'not being hidden', which is unacceptable given a classical account of negation. Finally, Heidegger appeals to the third kind of negation. Since Heidegger's negation affirms and rejects at the same time (since it says 'yes' and 'no'), what is 'not hidden' (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself) is both hidden and not hidden.

This is also the reason why, according to his account of truth, Heidegger claims that

“untruth is not plain falsity” (Heidegger, 1967, p.149). Since the negation contained in ‘*un-truth*’ is Heidegger’s notion of negation, ‘untruth’ both ‘accepts’ and ‘rejects’ truth. This means that an ‘un-true’ proposition is not true *only* because it is also false; *vice versa*, an ‘un-true’ proposition is not false *only* because it is also true. What is ‘un-true’ is both true and false. As Heidegger himself claims, “the primordial non-essence of truth, as un-truth, points to (...) the truth of being **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**” (Heidegger, 1967, p.149). Adopting the concept of *Aletheia*, the ontological difference is un-true. The proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is true (because this is the assumption Heidegger works with) and it is false (because, as we have seen, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity too). The proposition ‘**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity’ is neither true *only* nor false *only*. It is both true and false. In Heidegger’s terminology, it is un-true.

## Chapter 3

# *Außersein*

**Overview.** In this chapter, we run a comparison between Alexius Meinong and Martin Heidegger. We show that the ontologies developed by these two philosophers have some important features in common. We compare Heidegger's account of intentionality and Meinong's account of intentionality. We also show that there are important similarities between Heidegger's account of entities and Meinong's account of objects. Finally, we draw a comparison between Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and Meinong's *Außersein*.

Before continuing, I would like to make a short clarification. The present chapter does not want to fully assimilate Meinong's view to Heidegger's view. It simply aims to show that, as does Heidegger, Meinong faces a denotational paradox in the case of defective objects. It also suggests that Meinong can adopt a dialethic solution to the problem represented by defective objects, following the second Heidegger.

**Structure.** In **Section 2.1**, we discuss Meinong's account of intentionality (2.1.1) and Meinong's ontology (2.1.2 and 2.1.3). In **Section 2.2**, we introduce Heidegger's account of intentionality (2.2.1) and Heidegger's ontology (2.2.2 and 2.2.3). In **Section 2.3**, we propose a comparison between Meinong and Heidegger, discussing both their analogies and disanalogies. Finally, in **Section 2.4**, we argue that Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as an extreme case of Meinong's ontology.

## 3.1 Enter Meinong

### 3.1.1 Meinong's *Intentionalität*

According to Meinong, intentionality is that specific feature of cognition which distinguishes psychological events from non-psychological events.<sup>1</sup> Intentionality is that fundamental feature according to which any mental state is always directed towards an object and, as such, any mental state necessarily requires the object towards which it is directed. It also follows that whatever can be a target of a mental activity is indeed an object [*Gegenstand*]. As Meinong writes, this account of intentionality is so intuitive that “no one fails to recognize that psychological events so very commonly have this distinctive ‘character of being directed to something’ [*auf etwas Gerichtetsein*]” (Meinong, 1904, p.77). For instance, “knowing is impossible without something being known, (...) judgements and ideas or presentations are impossible without being judgements about and presentation of something” (Meinong, 1904, p.76). More complex psychological states, as in the case of emotions and desires, do not constitute an exception: “we are happy about something and, at least in the majority of cases, do not wish without wishing for something” (Meinong, 1904, p.77).

According to this intuition, Meinong's account of intentionality is grounded on two main components: a mental state directed towards an object and the object towards which the mental state is directed. Consider the following case: *X* thinks about *Y*. Such an intentional activity is composed of two elements: *X*'s mental state that is directed towards *Y* and an intentional object *Y* towards which the mental state is directed. Meinong focuses his attention on both of these components, proposing an account of psychological states and an account of intentional objects. Let's start with the first one.

Even though Meinong is clearly concerned with what is commonly called intentionality [*Intentionalität*], he never uses this term. Not only does Meinong endorse the idea that we can be intentionally directed towards the very same object by different kinds of mental activities but he also believes that we can have different kinds of intentional activities directed towards different kinds of objects. Indeed, as we can see from the next table, according to Meinong, there are two types of mental experience [*Erlebnis*]: the intellectual one and the emotional one. The intellectual experience is divided into repre-

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<sup>1</sup>It is common to find this idea in many other philosophers, such as Brentano, Husserl and Sartre. For more details, see Crane (1998) and chapter 6 of Voltolini (2009).

sensation [*Vorstellung*] and thought [*Gedanke*], while the emotional experience is divided into feeling [*Gefühl*] and desire [*Begehren*]. Each type of mental experience has a different kind of content. Concerning the intellectual experience, the content of a representation is called objectum [*Objekt*] and it is expressed by a noun or an adjective, while the content of a thought is called objective [*Objektiv*] and it concerns one or more representations. An objective can be expressed by an independent sentence (for instance, ‘red is a color’), by a ‘that’-clause (for instance, ‘that red is a color’) or by a nominal phrase (for instance, ‘the colorfulness of red’). Concerning the emotional experience, the content of a feeling is called dignitative [*Dignitativ*] (for instance, ‘the attractiveness of the color red’) and the content of a desire is called desiderative [*Desiderativ*] (for instance, ‘this fruit should be red’).<sup>2</sup>

Mental experience [ <i>Erlebnis</i> ]			
Intellectual		Emotional	
Representation	Thought	Feeling	Desire
[ <i>Vorstellung</i> ]	[ <i>Gedanke</i> ]	[ <i>Gefühl</i> ]	[ <i>Begehren</i> ]
Objectum	Objective	Dignitative	Desiderative
[ <i>Objekt</i> ]	[ <i>Objektiv</i> ]	[ <i>Dignitativ</i> ]	[ <i>Desiderativ</i> ]
« <i>Red</i> »	« <i>Red is a colour</i> »	« <i>The attractiveness of the colour red</i> »	« <i>This fruit should be red</i> »

For the purpose of this chapter, it is important to point out that, according to Meinong, objecta and objectives necessarily involve each other. On the one hand, whenever we represent the objectum ‘red’, we think something about it (for instance, we think that ‘red is a color’ or ‘red is something’). In both cases, in order to represent the objectum ‘red’, we think about it using objectives. On the other hand, it is not possible to think about something without any representation at all. For instance, when we think

<sup>2</sup>Meinong’s ideas about intentionality are highly controversial and there are a lot of different interpretations available on the market. However, the basic features of Meinong’s intentionality presented in this chapter are commonly accepted as true. For a more detailed discussion about the topic, see Marek (2001) and Ryle (1973).

about the objective ‘red is a color’, we employ the representation of the objectum ‘color’ and the representation of objectum ‘red’. As Kalsi points out: “An objective (...) can only be in virtue of its *inferiora*, namely the objects [objecta] on which it is based” (Kalsi, 1980, p.122).<sup>3</sup> This means that it is possible to have objectives only because they are grounded on some basic components (namely Kalsi’s *inferiora*), which are objecta. This is also the reason why, even though objecta and objectives involve each other, it is necessary to carefully distinguish between them because, according to Meinong, an objective may be the subject matter of further objectives but an objective is always grounded on objecta. Consider the following statement: “‘red is a color’ is a beautiful objective’. In this case, the subject matter of the objective in question (namely “‘red is a color’ is a beautiful objective’) is another objective (namely ‘red is a color’); however, ultimately, these objectives are grounded in objecta (for instance, ‘red’, ‘color’, ‘objective’).

To conclude, not only there are different kinds of intentional acts but, for each of these acts, there are different kinds of objects as well. However, objecta, objectives, dignitatives and desideratives are all intentional objects. They are all *Gegenstände*.

### 3.1.2 Meinong’s *Gegenstand*

Given this account of intentionality, what is an intentional object (namely a *Gegenstand*)? What is the metaphysical structure of an intentional object *à la* Meinong? According to Meinong, whatever can be experienced in any way is an object. Some objects have being [*Sein*] and some objects do not. Moreover, since he admits two different ways or modes of being (namely existence and subsistence), he is an ontological pluralist. Following Kris McDaniel (2009), we take ontological pluralism to be the view according to which different objects can be (or exist) in different ways.<sup>4</sup> Meinong holds the following view: objects that are spatio-temporally located (for instance, the Empire State Building in New York) both exist and subsist, while objects that still have a certain mode of being

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<sup>3</sup>Someone may have the following question: what does ‘an objective can only be in virtue of its inferiora’ mean, when some objectives have no being at all? This kind of worry seems to suggest that, if an objective does not have being, then the objective in question cannot be in virtue of their *inferiora*. However, I believe that, according to Meinong, all objectives subsist (as numbers, statements and propositions), even though they are about objects that do not have being at all. See Meinong, 1917.

<sup>4</sup>Among neo-meinongians, the pluralistic element concerning being has almost vanished. For instance, both Priest (2005) and Routley (1980) think that existence has a monistic meaning, while Parsons simply remains neutral avoiding the issue (cf. 1980, p.10).

without being spatio-temporal located (for instance, a mathematical object such as a prime number) subsist only.<sup>5</sup> If an object exists, then it necessarily subsists but not all objects that subsist necessarily exist (cf. Marek, 2013).<sup>6</sup> Finally, an object without any kind of being (for instance, a fictional object such as Sherlock Holmes) neither exists nor subsists.

Since it is possible to direct psychological activities towards something with being in the mode of existence (for instance, the computer that I am using right now), then some intentional objects exist. Since it is possible to direct psychological activities towards something with being in the mode of subsistence (for instance, a Fourier transformation), then some intentional objects subsist. Finally, since it is possible to direct psychological activities towards something that does not have being at all (for instance, fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes or Father Christmas), then some intentional objects neither exist nor subsist. In this last case, Meinong claims that an object without any mode of being has non-being [*Nichtsein*]. As all objects with being, all objects with non-being (all non-beings, using Marek's terminology (cf. Marek, 2013, p.12), or non-entities, using Routley's terminology (cf. Routley, 1980, p.7)) are welcomed in Meinong's ontology.<sup>7</sup> Being is treated as a property (the property of *being existent* or the property

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<sup>5</sup>Among neo-meinongians, the situation is more complicated. For instance, in his *Nonexistent Objects* (1980), Parsons works with a naïve understanding of 'existence', using "the word 'exists' so that it encompasses exactly those objects that orthodox philosophers hold to exist" (Parsons, 1980, p.11). Zalta is very close to the definition given by Meinong himself claiming that *existing* is *being located in space* (cf. Zalta, 1988, p.21). Last but not least, Priest, in *Towards non-being* (2005), suggests the relation between existence and causal efficacy. However, in paragraph 7.2 of the same book, he also recognizes a relation between existence and *being concrete*. Finally, in *Not to be* (2009), Priest discusses a relation between existence and *being spatio-temporally located*.

<sup>6</sup>In private conversation, both Francesco Berto and Kris McDaniel claimed that Meinong supports a different view. They claimed that, according to Meinong, existence and subsistence are opposite. In other words, if something exists, it does not subsist; if something subsists, it does not exist. They are not wrong about this. However, we should not forget that this is correct for the very early production of Meinong (for instance, *On Assumptions*, 1902), while, in the present chapter, I am only concerned with his late production. This is why, appealing to *The Theory of Object* and *On Possibility and Probability*, I claim that, according to Meinong, everything that exists subsists, while not everything that subsists exists as well.

<sup>7</sup>The analogy between Meinong's intentional objects instantiating non-being and Routley's non-entities is proposed by Marek (2013). However, this analogy may be misleading because, as we have claimed in footnote number 3 of the present chapter, Routley does not endorse any distinction between existence and subsistence. This means that, according to Routley, there are non-entities (namely objects

of *being subsistent*) and this property is instantiated by some objects (existent or subsistent objects) and not by others (objects that neither exist nor subsistent). Non-being is treated as a property as well and it is instantiated by some objects (objects that neither exist nor subsist) and not by some other objects (namely existent or subsistent objects).

Among all these objects with and without being, there are all kinds of weird objects: not only are there my laptop and Father Christmas but, for instance, there are also *impossibilia*, which are objects with inconsistent properties such as the square triangle. As we have already explained, in Meinong's terms, all these objects are objects because they can be a target of a mental activity: we can imagine Sherlock Holmes, remember my computer and we can argue about a square triangle. Of course, Sherlock Holmes, my laptop and the square triangle are very different objects; still, they are objects. They are *Gegenstände*.<sup>8</sup>

Meinong's ontology can accommodate such a vast range of objects because it is grounded on two main principles. [1] First of all, he endorses the **Principle of Independence** which states that the existence or subsistence of an object is independent from all the other properties that this object has. In other words, any object has the properties that this object has regardless its ontological status. As Marek reports: "Such principle applies, not only to objects which do not exist in fact, but also to objects which could not exist because they are impossible. Not only is the much heralded gold mountain made of gold, but the round square is as surely round as it is square" (Marek, 2013, p.12). [2] Secondly, he endorses the Principle of Indifference (also called **Principle of *Außersein***) according to which "the pure object stands beyond being and non-being" (Marek, 2013, p.13). This means that both being (namely, having existence or subsistence) and non-being are not part of the object's nature – they do not represent what really constitutes the essence of an object. The ontological status of an object does not

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instantiating non-being) that, according to Meinong, subsist. For instance, according to Routley (2003), mathematical objects, such as numbers, are non-entities (namely entities that do not instantiate any mode of being); nonetheless, according to Meinong, mathematical objects are subsistent entities (which means that they instantiate a mode of being). The analogy seems to break down.

<sup>8</sup>It is difficult to establish if Meinong thought that inconsistent objects (such as *impossibilia*) require a switch from classical logic to paraconsistent logic. According to Routley (1980), it is possible to interpret Meinong both in a classical way or in a paraconsistent way. Among neo-meinongians, both Parsons (1980) and Zalta (1988) have developed a consistent version of Meinongianism, while Priest (2005) and Routley (1980) have developed a version of Meinongianism which is friendly towards genuinely inconsistent objects.

affect what an object is. As Findlay specifies (1963, p.49), from this principle, it does not follow that an object can neither instantiate being nor non-being because, according to the law of excluded middle which Meinong seems to subscribe, every object necessarily has either being or non-being.

From these two principles, it naturally follows a radical denial of the Quinean idea that there are no true statements about objects instantiating non-being. Since Meinong develops an ontology which is friendly towards objects instantiating non-being, he also wants to be able to state true things about them. Meinong aims to have an ontology where, even though Sherlock Holmes neither exists nor subsists, it is still true that Sherlock Holmes is a detective. Indeed, according to the characterization principle (*CP*), any object has the properties that it is characterized as having. For any characterization, an object which satisfies that characterization is in the domain of discourse. Not only is *CP* (or, at least, the so-called naïve form of it) regarded as a crucial principle for Meinong but, in its updated versions, *CP* is also the main commitment for all the contemporary developments of Meinongianism (cf. Parsons, 1980; Routley, 1980; Zalta, 1988; Priest, 2005). This is the reason why, since the naïve version of *CP* was vulnerable to many different objections, both Meinong and contemporary neo-meinongians have devoted much efforts to revise it.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, for the purpose of the present chapter, it is not necessary to discuss in details all the versions of *CP* recently developed by neo-meinongians. It is enough to say that, for all of them, *CP* ensures that even objects without being have (at least, in some sense) the properties that they are characterized as having. As I have claimed in ‘Nonexistent Objects as Truth-Makers: Against Crane’s Reductionism’ (2016), the fact that all objects (regardless their ontological status) have the properties that they are described as having is an essential feature of all different forms of (neo-)Meinongianism.

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<sup>9</sup>Some neo-meinongians (cf. Parsons (1980); Routley (1980)) claim that, distinguishing nuclear and extra-nuclear properties, *CP* must be applied to characterizations which contain only nuclear properties. Some other neo-meinongians (cf. Zalta 1988) claim that there are two different ways of having properties: encoding and exemplifying. According to them, a nonexistent object encodes all the property it is characterized as having but does not exemplify them. Finally, another group of neo-meinongians (cf. Priest 2005; Berto 2013, Chap.6.3) claims that an object has all the properties it is characterized as having not necessarily in the actual world but in some possible or impossible worlds. In my ‘The Future Perfect of *Exploring Meinong’s Jungle and Beyond*’ (forthcomingb), I show that Routley was developing a new *CP* similar to the one defended by Priest and Berto. Unfortunately, he died before having the possibility of publishing his ideas about it.

According to the **Principle of Independence**, the properties instantiated by an object are independent from its ontological status. The properties instantiated by an object compose the *Sosein* of the object itself.<sup>10</sup> An object has its *Sosein* and whatever has a *Sosein* is an object. If it possible to refer to  $X$ ,  $X$  is an object; if  $X$  is an object,  $X$  has properties; if  $X$  has properties,  $X$  has a *Sosein* collecting these properties. Moreover, since being is treated as a property, the *Sosein* of an object with being contains all the properties instantiated by that object. Among these properties, there is also being (namely either *being existent* or *being subsistent*). On the contrary, the *Sosein* of an object without being contains all the properties instantiated by that object. Among these properties, there is the property of non-being.

We can schematically explain this idea in the following way. As the table below shows, an object (represented by the first row from the top) has a *Sosein* (represented by the second row in the table). As we can see, in the *Sosein*, there are properties ( $[P_1] \dots [P_n]$ ) instantiated by the object in question. Given Meinong, since all objects either instantiate being or non-being, in the *Sosein*, there is either *Sein*, in the mode of existence or subsistence, or *Nichtsein* (see the table below, between  $[P_1]$  and  $[P_4]$ ).

Object [ <i>Gegenstand</i> ]
$[P_1]$
$[P_2]$
<i>Sein</i> (Existence or Subsistence) or <i>Nichtsein</i>
$[P_4]$
$[P_n]$
Outside-Being [ <i>Außersein</i> ]

Consider my laptop: it is an existent object and, in its *Sosein*, it has all the properties that my laptop has (for instance, **[P1]** *being grey*, **[P2]** *being metallic*, **[P4]** *being old*).

<sup>10</sup>We are aware that the properties contained in the *Sosein* of an object change according to the *CP* in use. For instance, if we work with Parsons' version of *CP*, namely the *CP* applied to characterizations which contain only nuclear properties, the *Sosein* contains only nuclear properties too. Since we are discussing the most basic form of Meinongianism (called naïve Meinongianism), we take *Sosein* to collect all the properties that an object instantiates without any restriction or constrain.

Since my laptop is spatio-temporally located and, thus, it exists, it is also the case that its *Sosein* contains that specific mode of being, which is represented by the property of *being existent*. Moreover, since existence always implies subsistence, my laptop subsists too. Secondly, consider a prime number. In the *Sosein* of this object, there are some properties too. For instance, there are the properties of **[P1]** *being a number* and **[P2]** *being prime*. Moreover, since, following Meinong, mathematical objects subsist but do not exist, in the *Sosein* of a prime number, there is the property of *being subsistent* too. Finally, consider a trickier example, namely Sherlock Holmes. According to Doyle's stories, he is a detective, he is smart and he lives in Baker Street. In a Meinongian framework, Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein* contains all the properties that Sherlock Holmes has (for instance, **[P1]** *being a detective*, **[P2]** *being smart*, **[P4]** *being resident in Baker Street* and so on). This last example is unusual because, according to Doyle's stories, Sherlock Holmes exists. This means that, following naïve Meinong, in Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein*, there must be the property of *being existent*. However, this is clearly not the case because there is no such object as an existent Sherlock Holmes. This problem has been solved by neo-meinongians developing different kinds of *CP*.<sup>11</sup>

Even though different neo-meinongians endorse different versions of the characterization principle, the interpretation of Meinong's ontology presented above is widely accepted. Nevertheless, as we can see from the previous table (third line from the top), there is a further element in Meinong's ontology. Indeed, he thinks that all objects have outside-being [*Außersein*]. The interpretation of this last element is controversial.

### 3.1.3 Meinong's *Außersein*

Digging into the secondary literature, it is possible to find four different accounts of *Außersein*.

**[1]** The most common account is a deflationary one. People endorsing this stance focus

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<sup>11</sup>For instance, consider Parsons' *CP*, according to which, in the *Sosein* of an object, there are only nuclear properties. Since, according to Parsons himself, the property of *being existent* is not a nuclear property, such a property is not in Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein*. Another example is Priest's *CP*, according to which an object has the properties that it is characterized as having, but not necessarily in the actual world. This means that Sherlock Holmes' *Sosein* contains the property of *being existent*, but in a possible world. Both strategies are meant to solve the problem faced by naïve Meinong.

on the **Principle of *Außersein*** without discussing what *Außersein* is.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, it is natural to think that any ‘principle of *X*’ concerns *X* without being *X*. As the Newtonian law of gravity is not gravity but it is about gravity, the principle of *Außersein* is not *Außersein* but it is about *Außersein*. Even though, the two concepts look intuitively related, they are still different. Meinong himself is very careful in keeping the two ideas apart: on the one hand, he talks about a principle which is concerned with the *Außersein* of a ‘pure object’ [*Der Satz vom Außersein des reinen Gegenstandes*]; on the other hand, he talks about *Außersein* itself using this expression as a noun-phrase independently from the principle grounded in it. Moreover, given the Meinongian assumption that every time there is an intentional act, this act is directed towards an object, *Außersein* has to be an object too. Indeed, Meinong himself talks and thinks about it. Thus, if one is interested in understanding what this object called *Außersein* is, the deflationary account is not helpful.

[2] An alternative approach to outside-being [*Außersein*] is proposed by Grossman (1973).<sup>13</sup> According to him, *Außersein*, namely what is outside being, is being and non-being. He starts considering an object A, which has being. He thinks that, following Meinong, we are committed to say that there is a ‘pure object’ A and a certain objective A\* concerning object A. However, Grossman specifies that, even though the objective A\* consists in the union of A and A’s being, there is no such object as A with its own being: A is nothing more than A itself (without the addition of A’s being). After that, Grossman invites us to consider the very same object A but, this time, without being. This means that A has non-being. Once again, the objective which represents A with non-being (let’s call it -A\*) consists in the union of A and A’s non-being. Nevertheless, there is no such object as A and its own non-being because, as Grossman has claimed before, A is nothing more than A itself (without the addition of A’s non-being). In other words, to say that A has being is not to say that an object called being is a part of A. In the same way, to say that

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<sup>12</sup>As Rapaport (1984), Routley (1980) and Parsons (1980) pointed out, the Meinongian notion of *Außersein* has never been taken into great consideration. According to them, Meinong’s *Theory of object* is often used to criticize the Quinean intuition according to which everything exists. And this is the reason why, all neo-meinongians have uniquely focused their attention on the concept of *Sein* and *Nichtsein*.

<sup>13</sup>As Routley has pointed out in some unpublished notes (Sylvan, Box 23), Grossman’s interpretation of *Außersein* is unclear. I agree with Routley. What follows is the best we could do to make sense of it.

A has non-being is not to say that an object called non-being is part of A. According to Grossman, “[existence and subsistence] cannot be parts of objects” because, since they are literally outside being, “there are no such entities [namely objects] as existence and subsistence. They can [only] be parts of objectives” (Grossman, 1973, p.48). In the same way, non-being cannot be part of an object because there is no such object as non-being. Grossman is also clear that ‘being a part of’ means ‘being an ontological constituent of’ an object. For instance, *being red* is part of a red object because it constitutes the redness of the object in question.

To see why Grossman’s interpretation is implausible, let’s start by pointing out that the expression “there are no such entities [namely objects] as existence and subsistence” is highly ambiguous. To begin with, it can be interpreted as ‘existence and subsistence are not entities [namely objects]’. If this is the case, Grossman’s interpretation of *Außersein* is incompatible with Meinong’s account of intentionality according to which every time we refer to something, we refer to an object. Since we can refer to existence and subsistence (since, for instance, I can say that ‘existence is a property’ and that ‘subsistence is different from existence’), they have to be objects too. According to Meinong, this is enough to state that being (in both the modes of existence and subsistence) is an object. The same holds for non-being. At this point, either Meinong is so naïve as to violate his own premises or he actually thinks that everything we refer to is an object but that being (in the mode of existence and substance) and non-being are somehow exceptions. In the first case, if we believe in the principle of charity, namely the principle according to which is always better to have interpretations that maximize the rationality of what the interpreted author thinks or writes, then Grossman’s interpretation does not look charitable at all. In the second case, according to Grossman, Meinong seems to make an *ad hoc* move just to guarantee the fact that, since being and non-being are not objects themselves, they cannot be part of any object either. Not only is this move unjustified (Meinong and Grossman do not explicitly propose any argument in favor of it) but it is difficult to see why, according to Grossman, being (existence or subsistence) and non-being cannot be part of an object but they can be part of objectives. This interpretation does not look convincing.

Then, let’s try to examine a second possible reading which interprets the proposition “there are no such entities [namely objects] as being and subsistence” as ‘entities [namely objects] like being and subsistence do not have being’. Once again, the same would hold

for non-being. In Meinongian terms, this means that being and non-being neither exist nor subsist. In this sense, being and non-being are *Außersein* – they are literally outside being. Being and non-being do not have being. This second interpretation cannot be philosophically accurate because, even assuming that being cannot be part of an object in virtue of the fact that neither exists nor subsists, then, not only being (which is either *being existent* or *being subsistent*), but also all the other properties (such as *being red* or *being sweet*) should not be part of an object either. According to this view, the properties *being red* and *being sweet* can not be part of a red sweet object and, thus, given Grossman’s definition of ‘being part of’, they can not constitute the redness or the sweetness of this object. This second interpretation, as the previous one, contradicts another fundamental assumption of Meinong’s theory of objects according to which objects, regardless of their ontological status, have the properties that they are characterized as having.<sup>14</sup> In Meinongian terms, objects always have a *Sosein* collecting the properties that these objects are characterized as having. Once again, this interpretation does not seem correct.

[3] The third account of *Außersein* is proposed by Lambert in his *Meinong and the Principle of Independence* (1983). According to Lambert, *Außersein* refers to the domain of nonexistent objects which is “literally, the domain of objects outside of being” (1983, p.14). As he points out, such a domain is enormous and, among its denizens, it comprehends “possible objects such as Pegasus or the golden mountain and also impossible objects such as the round square” (1983, p.22). In this case, *Außersein* is understood as the set of all objects with *Sosein* that do not contain being: *Außersein* is taken to be the set of all objects that do not instantiate either the property of *being existent* or the property of *being subsistent*. Nevertheless, this interpretation also faces some prob-

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<sup>14</sup>According to Grossman, being and not-being are not constitutive part of an object (they are not in the *Sosein* of an object) because they neither exist nor subsist. However, since, according to Meinong, being and not-being are just normal properties, it is plausible to assume that, if being and not-being are not constitutive part of an object, then all the other properties are not constitutive part of an object either. This is against Meinong’s *Theory of Objects*, which claims that an object has the properties that it is characterized as having. In order to make this point clearer, consider the following example. It is true that ‘Sherlock Holmes is a detective’ because Sherlock Holmes instantiates the property of *being a detective*. This means that the property of *being a detective* is a constitutive part of Sherlock Holmes’ *Sosein*. Given what we have argued before about Grossman’s interpretation, this cannot be true because, from his account of *Außersein*, it follows that no properties can be constitutive part of the *Sosein* of an object.

lems. Since, according to Meinong, all objects have *Außersein* (cf. Meinong, 1904, p. 83-86; Meinong, 1917, p. 19; Marek, 2013) and even assuming that we can charitably interpret Meinong's idea as 'any object is a member of *Außersein*', Meinong immediately becomes a nihilist. If every object is a member of *Außersein* and *Außersein* is the set of all nonexistent objects, it follows that all objects are nonexistent objects. If we assume this interpretation of *Außersein*, we have to accept that there are no existent objects at all. This conclusion is evidently against Meinong's ontology according to which, even though some objects do not exist (even though, in the *Sosein* of some objects, there is non-being), some objects exist and some other subsist. In other words, in the *Sosein* of some other objects, there is being.

[4] The fourth account interprets *Außersein* as what makes an object an object. Recently, two philosophers have supported this idea in two similar ways: Jacquette and Priest.

Let's start with Jacquette. Following Lambert, in his *Alexius Meinong, the Shepherd of Non-Being* (2015), Jacquette thinks that *Außersein* is a set or a domain of objects. However, Jacquette disagrees with Lambert, on the idea that *Außersein* collects nonexistent objects because, according to his interpretation, Meinong's *Außersein* is not a notion concerned with ontological issues. "*Außersein* is not a special kind of *Sein* [and it is not a special kind of *Nichtsein* either]" because "[it] is not a subcategory of the ontology" (2015, p. 71). Jacquette reads *Außersein* as the set of all objects regardless of whether these objects have being or non-being. *Außersein* is simply "the name Meinong later gives to what he speaks (...) as the pure object [*reiner Gegenstand*] considered independently of its ontic status" (Jacquette, 2015, p. 71). According to Jacquette, all objects, only in virtue the fact they instantiate the property of *being an object*, belong to *Außersein* which is "an ontologically neutral referential domain that falls entirely outside the ontology of existent or subsistent entities, as existed intended objects or intended objects with being. (...) *Außersein* as 'extraontology'" (2015, p. 71).

This interpretation is consistent with Meinong's ontology. Since Meinong himself claims that all objects have *Außersein*, but only some objects have being, it is natural to think that there is a set collecting all objects, whatever their ontological status is. Jacquette calls this set '*Außersein*'. Nevertheless, someone may be suspicious towards Jacquette's interpretation because Meinong never talks about sets or domains. On the

contrary, he is clear that *Außersein* is something that all objects have, possess or, so to speak, instantiate (cf. Meinong 1904). In Meinong's words, "*Außersein* seems clearly predicable to all objects" (Meinong, 1917, p.19). An object does not have, possess or instantiate a set or a domain but, more correctly, it is a member of a set or it belongs to a domain. For this reason, it would be more natural to read *Außersein* as a property that all objects possess or instantiate. Such an interpretation is delivered by Priest in his *Sein Language* (2014c).

Priest interprets Meinong's idea that any object has *Außersein* as "any object is simply an object" (Priest, 2014c, p.439). Thus, *Außersein* is understood simply as the property of *being an object*. If something is an object, it instantiates the property of *being an object* – it has *Außersein*. Meinong himself seems to support this interpretation claiming that: "even what neither exists nor subsists (...) has still a remnant of a positional character, [that is] *Außersein*" (Meinong, 1983, p.12). Here, Meinong suggests that, regardless of the ontological status of an object, for any object, there is always something contributing to its 'positional character', namely something that makes any object an object 'present' to the consciousness of a subject. This something is *Außersein*.

Since, according to Meinong, *being present to a subject consciousness* means *being an (intentional) object*, *Außersein* is what makes an object an object – it is the *objecthood* of an object. Moreover, since everything that has properties is an object and having properties is having a *Sosein*, then if something has *Außersein* (if something is an object), it has properties too (it has a *Sosein*). Having *Außersein* is equivalent to having *Sosein*: since *Außersein* is a property, even an object which has only the property of *Außersein* would have a *Sosein* containing, at least, one property, that is the property of *being an object*. Priest also adds that "if something is an object it is self-identical (*Identitätsein*) and *vice versa*" (Priest, 2014c, p. 439). Thus, everything that is an object instantiates some properties (or, at least, the only property of *being an object*) and everything that instantiates at least a property has a *Sosein*. Moreover, everything that is an object instantiates the property of *being an object* (namely *Außersein*) and everything that instantiates the property of *being an object* is self-identical. Everything that is an object has *Außersein* and it is self-identical.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Someone can argue that Priest's account of *Außersein* treats *Außersein* as a third mode of being and this is explicitly denied by Meinong (for instance, see Grossman (1974)). However, this objection is wrong because, according to Priest, *Außersein* is not a mode of being but it is the necessary condition

Assuming Priest’s account of *Außersein*, and going beyond what Meinong has explicitly claimed, some interesting remarks could follow. Indeed, *Außersein* is a metaphysically fundamental property, an *ur*-property. We take an *ur*-property to be a property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. Consider the property of *being red*. This is not an *ur*-property because its instantiation is not entailed by the instantiation of the property of *being a car*. Indeed, we can have cars that are not red. However, the property of *being an object* is an *ur*-property because the instantiation of any property entails its instantiation. In order, for something, to be red, green, tall or heavy, this something has to be a thing, namely an object, in the first place. Moreover, according to Meinong, it is enough for something to have a property in order to be an object. If something has a *Sosein* (if something has properties), it is an object. If something is an object, it trivially has *Außersein*, namely it trivially has the property of *being an object*. From this point of view, *Außersein* is that *ur*-property the instantiation of which is always and necessarily entailed by any other property. In the rest of the present chapter, we will assume Priest’s interpretation of *Außersein*.

## 3.2 Enter Heidegger

### 3.2.1 Heidegger’s *Intentionalität*

If Meinong clearly develops a philosophy of psychology and an ontological account of intentional objects, Heidegger does not have such a clear-cut distinction between these two aspects of his work. Nevertheless, as I argue in ‘The Recent Engagement between Analytic Philosophy and Heidegger’s Thought: Metaphysics and Mind’ (forthcominga), he undoubtedly gives significant contributions to both fields of research. Let’s begin with the first one.

Even though the expression ‘intentionality’ is largely absent in the Heideggerian corpus, Heidegger is deeply concerned with this topic as well. Indeed, in his *History of the concept of time*, he claims that ‘intentionality’ is one of the “decisive discoveries of phenomenology” that he has assumed in developing his own metaphysics (Heidegger, 1989b, p.3). Since both Meinong and Heidegger started their research from Brentano, their

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to have any mode of being. In order to be an existent or a subsistent object, it is necessary to be an object.

accounts of intentionality share two main features.<sup>16</sup> [1] First of all, as with Meinong, Heidegger thinks that an intentional activity is always directed towards something. This is why Heidegger claims that “[intentional] comportments have the structure of *directing-oneself-towards*, of *being-directed-towards* [something]” (Heidegger, 1975, p. 57). [2] Secondly, Heidegger shares with Meinong the idea that intentionality is a “comportment” which is always “directed towards this whereto: in formal terms, it is related or referred to an entity” (Heidegger, 1975, p. 62). Then, an intentional activity requires two *relata*: a subject’s comportment directed towards an object and the object towards which the subject’s comportment is directed. Heidegger calls this second *relatum* ‘entity’ [*Gegenstand*].<sup>17</sup> As we have explained in chapter 1, according to Heidegger, an entity is “what[ever] is put in front of the perception, the imagination, the judgement, the desire and the intuition” (Heidegger, 1967, p.28). Consistently with Meinong, Heidegger thinks that every time we refer to something with an intentional activity (for example, with our thoughts, imagination or emotional states), this something is an (intentional) object or, in Heidegger’s terms, it is an entity. Even more explicitly, in his *Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, Heidegger claims that “a thought is always a thought about something” because “each thought is related to a specific entity which is in front of us” (Heidegger, 1978, p.13).<sup>18</sup>

Even though there are many similarities between Meinong’s and Heidegger’s account of intentionality, there is also a significant difference. On the contrary of Meinong, Heidegger believes that intentional activities are not always concerned with only one single entity. *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the human being, has the unique feature of *being-in-the-world* [*Sein-in-der-Welt*] and the world is the totality of all entities. In other terms, the

<sup>16</sup>For a complete overview of the relation between Heidegger and Brentano, see the first section, second chapter of Volpi (2010).

<sup>17</sup>As we have already claimed in the first footnote of the first chapter, Heidegger uses a lot of different terms to refer to intentional objects (for instance, ‘entity’, ‘object’ and ‘thing’). All these terms have a phenomenological different meaning. However, in the present work, we treat all these terms as synonyms.

<sup>18</sup>I am aware that many Heideggerians are not sympathetic with the idea that intentionality is a relation between a ‘mental state’ and an entity. However, I believe that, even assuming that Heidegger disagrees on the fact that intentionality is a relation between a mental state and an entity, he himself undoubtedly agrees on the fact that ‘comportments’ require something which the comportments are about (for instance, a hammer, a work of art, or even the world). As such, the paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is still there. Another way of rephrasing such a paradox is the following: even though it should be impossible to have a comportment towards **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an thing), we still have a comportment towards **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

world contains everything that is. When human beings are directed towards an entity through an intentional activity, they relate to this entity placing it in a network of other entities.<sup>19</sup> For *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>, an entity is always in relation with other entities. In Heidegger's words: "For our [intentional] comportments towards entities, we never think a single entity, and whenever we size up expressively for itself we are taking it out of a contexture to which it belongs in the real content" (Heidegger, 1975, p. 31).

Thus, as with Meinong, Heidegger thinks that intentionality is still a relation in which one of the two *relata* is an entity. Nevertheless, since the subject of these mental comportments (namely Heidegger's *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>) has the very specific feature of dwelling in the world as a network of entities, sometimes the human being does not direct his intentional activity towards one entity only, but, metaphorically speaking, the human being inhabits the relation between the entities themselves. Heidegger thinks that an accurate phenomenology of *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>'s intentional activities can show this fact: in some specific circumstances, the human beings do not only deal with entities as they are decontextualized entities, but they also dwell in the relation between them and other entities too – they are *in-the-world* [*In-der-Welt-sein*]. It is important to point out that, from the Heideggerian definition of intentionality, it does not follow that an intentional activity does not require an entity towards which the activity is directed. It simply means that an intentional activity is not necessarily a binary relation between a mental state and an entity, but it can also be a relation between a mental state and some (or even all) entities in the world. In order to have a better understanding of Heidegger's account of intentionality, let's examine the following table.

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<sup>19</sup>This idea is clear in an example proposed by Dreyfus (1990). Consider musicians. When musicians play a symphony, they do not only intentionally relate to their instruments but to the beauty of the symphony, their feelings, the other musicians and so on and so forth. In this sense, according to Heidegger, intentionality is a complex phenomena that does not simply concern a relation with an (intentional) object only.

Modes of Encounter		
Practical		Intellectual
Ready-to-hand	Unready-to-hand	Present-at-hand
Equipment	Equipment / Thing	Thing
« <i>Hammer</i> »	« <i>Broken Hammer</i> »	« <i>The hammer as an object of study</i> »

As in the case of Meinong, Heidegger divides intentional activities (namely *Dasein*\*'s modes of encountering entities) into two main categories: practical and intellectual activities. To begin with, he thinks that, in our everyday life, practical activities are represented by the encounter with a specific kind of entity called a piece of equipment. In this case, the intentional activity towards such kind of entity is a “telic one” (Heidegger, 1927, p.42). As “we do not perceive in order to perceive but in order to (...) pave the way in dealing with something” (Heidegger, 1927, p.42), in the same way, when we encounter a piece of equipment, we always encounter it for specific tasks. According to Heidegger, we do not achieve our most primordial relation with a piece of equipment either by thinking about it or with some detached theoretical research, but rather by skilfully using it. Only in this way, is a piece of equipment *ready-to-hand*, namely as it is ready to be used by the *Dasein*\*. Consider a hammer. According to Heidegger, “the less we just stare at the hammer-*thing*, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our [intentional] relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is – as a piece of equipment” (Heidegger, 1927, p. 42). Moreover, as many interpreters have already pointed out (cf. Dreyfus, 1990; Wheeler, 2011), while engaged in trouble-free hammering, the really skilled carpenter does not (intentionally) engage with the hammer only. From this point of view, the skilled carpenter dwells in the world. *Dasein*\*'s capacity of using equipments in this skillful way (what Heidegger calls ‘circum-spection’) is not only grounded on the relation between that subject (the carpenter) and that entity (the hammer). Even though skilled carpenters have probably thought about the hammer, the relation between a skilled subject using the hammer and the hammer itself is more complicated than the simple relation between someone thinking about the hammer and the hammer. Indeed, skilled carpenters are aware of the deep meaning of

the hammer because they dwell in the network of all entities in which the hammer is placed, namely the hammer itself *and* the nail *and* the work-bench *and* the beauty of what the carpenter is building *and* ...

The second kind of intentional activity is the intellectual one. When *Dasein*\* engages in scientific practices, when his or her mental states are devoted purely to reflective or philosophical contemplation, the object of study is abstract from the world, from the network of entities. It is isolated and treated as a simple entity of study. For this reason, following Heidegger, the entity (which is now called ‘thing’ [*Ding*]) is not *ready-to-hand* but it is *present-at-hand*. Consider an engineer designing a hammer. In this case, *Dasein*\* intentionally relates with the hammer as something that needs to be studied and theoretically understood. *Dasein*\* does not need to place the hammer in the network of other entities in order to use it properly because *Dasein*\* is not interested in using the hammer at all. In order to project a hammer is not necessary to be a skillful carpenter: it is not relevant to dwell in the relation between the hammer *and* the nail *and* the work-bench *and* the beauty of what the carpenter is building *and* .... An abstract understanding, which isolates the entity from the world, is enough. In this case, the hammer is *present-at-hand*.

Finally, according to Heidegger, among the practical intentional activities, there is also another phenomenological category which represents the intentional activity directed towards something that is indeed a piece of equipment but it is a broken one. *Dasein*\*, realizing that a piece of equipment malfunctions, is still aware that such a piece of equipment is not a mere thing, namely it is not simply *present-at-hand*. It has the potential of being *ready-to-hand*. Nonetheless, because such a piece of equipment is broken, it is not fully *ready-to-hand* either: it cannot be used. As Heidegger writes: “the *presence-at-hand* of something that cannot be used is still not devoid of all *readiness-to-hand* whatsoever; a piece of equipment which is *present-at-hand* is still not just a thing which occurs somewhere” (Heidegger, 1927, p.35). In this case, Heidegger thinks that a broken piece of equipment is *unready-to-hand*. Consider a broken hammer. Since it is a hammer, it is a piece of equipment; however, it cannot function as a piece of equipment because it is broken. Thus, when *Dasein*\* intentionally relates to a broken hammer, *Dasein*\* understands that the broken hammer is a piece of equipment without being able to be used as such.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>I am aware that there are other possible interpretations of Heidegger’s intentionality on the market.

In conclusion, it is important to specify that, beside the distinctions between different kinds of entities and different kinds of intentional activities, Heidegger thinks that, given any intentional act, there is always an entity corresponding to it. Nevertheless, the question of the ontological nature of these entities remains open. Concerning this worry and starting with *Being and time* (1927), Heidegger develops an ontology, which shows other significant similarities with Meinong's metaphysics. Let's discuss them.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.2.2 Heidegger's *Gegenstand*

Heidegger's ontology has three main features in common with Meinong's theory of objects. [1] First of all, as we have previously introduced, according to both of them, an object or an entity is everything we can refer to. In Heideggerian terms: "an entity is what is represented" (Heidegger, 1967, p.29). [2] Secondly, even though Heidegger does not introduce any distinction between existence and subsistence, he endorses another version of ontological pluralism according to which there are different modes of existence. For instance, on the one hand, some entities have *Existenz*\*. According to Heidegger (1927), *Existenz*\* is a term that is rooted in the existentialist tradition and it refers to a unique metaphysical attitude proper of *Dasein*\* only. Indeed, the human being is the only kind of entity that can dwell in the world in the way previously described. As we have discussed in the first chapter, the human being is also the only kind of entity that can ask the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). On the other hand, some other entities exist in another way: they have *Wirklichkeit*\* which refers to the Latin *existentia*, namely the property of *being material* or the property of *being real*. According to Heidegger, a table has *Wirklichkeit*\* (in the sense that a table instantiates the property of *being material* or

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For instance, see McDaniel forthcoming. However, in this chapter, we just take into consideration the most common one.

<sup>21</sup>It is difficult to find a quotation according to which any intentional state requires an intentional object (or an entity). However, in his *Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, Heidegger claims that: "a thought is always a thought about something" because "each thought is related to a specific entity which is in front of us" (Heidegger, 1978, p.13). Moreover, many quotations used in chapter 2 seem to suggest the idea that, when we engage in intentional activities (or comportments), we engage with entities as well. Heidegger's definition of entity is also deeply connected with intentionality. For instance, in his course on Kant, Heidegger claims that an entity is whatever we can think about (see footnote number 9, previous chapter). Finally it is important to specify that the fact that any intentional act requires an intentional object is hermeneutically powerful, because it seems the only way to explain why Heidegger thinks that talking and thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is actually paradoxical.

the property of *being real*) while human beings, even though they are material and real as tables, have *Existenz\** (in the sense that they instantiate the property of *being existent* because they can inhabit the world asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). [3] The third and last feature in common between Meinong's ontology and Heidegger's ontology is the following one: on the one hand, Meinong thinks that all objects are objects because they instantiate the property of *being an object* – such a property is called *Außersein*. On the other hand, as we have extensively discussed in chapter 1, Heidegger believes that all entities are entities simply because they *are* (because they are objects). What makes objects objects is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Then, as we can see from the following table, the ontological structure of Heidegger's entity (represented by the first row from the top) is similar to the Meinongian one. Indeed, according to Heidegger, an entity has some features (these features are represented in second row of the table below by **[P1]**, **[P2]** ... **[Pn]**) and these features determine its mode of being. For instance, in some cases, an entity can be *ready-at-hand* and, in some other cases, it can be *present-to-hand*. In some cases, an entity can enjoy *Existenz\** (namely the property of *being existent*) and, in some other cases, *Wirklichkeit\** (namely the property of *being material* or *being real*). Finally, all entities, exactly in virtue of their *being entities*, have **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Object [ <i>Gegenstand</i> ]
[P <sub>1</sub> ]
[P <sub>2</sub> ]
Existenz or Wirklichkeit or ...
[P <sub>4</sub> ]
[P <sub>n</sub> ]
Being [ <i>Sein</i> ]

Consider the following examples. Once again, take a hammer, which has some specific features: for instance, it has the feature of **[P1]** *being made out of wood*, **[P2]** *being metallic* and it also has the feature of **[P3]** *being a piece of equipment*. Due to **[P3]**, the hammer is a tool (something that is ready to be used by *Dasein\**) and, for this

reason, according to the intentional account previously described, a skilled carpenter can master it. In this case, the hammer is *ready-at-hand*. Moreover, since it is real, it is an existent object too: it enjoys *Wirklichkeit\** (namely the feature of *being material* or *being real*). Now, suppose that the hammer in question is broken. This hammer has exactly all the features that it had before, but it has also the feature of *being broken*. Since the carpenter cannot use it, it cannot be *ready-at-hand*. Indeed, it is *unready-at-hand*. This means that the feature that an object has (namely its properties) determine its mode of being. Finally, consider a geometrical figure. Take a triangle. According to Heidegger, a triangle has some features: for instance, it has the feature of **[P1]** *having three sides* and it has the feature of **[P2]** *having three angles*. Given these features, the triangle cannot be used as a piece of equipment: it is simply an object of study, of theoretical contemplation. Consistently with Heidegger's account of intentionality, the triangle is not *ready-at-hand* but it is *present-to-hand*. It is not meant to be used, to be manipulated but it is meant to be studied. It is important to specify that, since a hammer, a broken hammer and triangle are entities, they are entities because of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Even though many scholars have different interpretations of Heidegger's account of intentionality and Heidegger's ontology, the overview presented here is widely accepted. Nevertheless, as in the case of Meinong's *Außersein*, what is more controversial is the understanding of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) which, according to Heidegger himself, is the main and more radical component of an entity.

### 3.2.3 Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**)

There are three main accounts of Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. All these three accounts are concerned only with the so-called first Heidegger.

**[1]** The first account, which is also the most famous one, interprets Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as the 'meaning' [*Sinn\**] of entities. Following Dreyfus's (1990) and Crowell's interpretation (2001), the difference between entities and the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities is the difference between entities and their meaning. This is also the reason why Heidegger's metaphysics is often interpreted as "an inquiry into meaning [*Sinn\**], into the condition for the appearance of entities [*Seiendes*]" (Crowell, 2001, pp.119-120).<sup>22</sup> In particular,

<sup>22</sup>The position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the *meaning* of entities is clearly stated by Dreyfus. However, he often uses the expression 'intelligibility' instead of the expression 'meaning'. Dreyfus:

following John Haugeland’s interpretation, *Dasein*\* understands the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities, namely the meaning of entities, if and only if *Dasein*\* is able to “project entities onto their possibilities” (Haugeland, 2013, p. 196). Haugeland makes the connection between entities and their **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely their meaning, by claiming that “disclosing the being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities involves grasping them in terms of distinction between what is possible and impossible for them” (Haugeland, 2013, p.196). Expressing the same idea in a slightly different way, Haugeland claim that “the being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities is effectively determined by relevant modal constrains” (Haugeland 2013, p. 185). For instance, chess pieces are understood in terms of the moves that are possible for them and the moves that are not possible for them. In other terms, to be a rook is to be able to move in straight lines and not to be able to move diagonally. Turning our attention to a more famous Heideggerian example, Haugeland’s interpretation seems to work for a piece of equipment as well. On the one hand, to be a hammer is to be something with which it is possible to pound a nail into wood. On the other hand, to be a hammer is also to be something with which is impossible to break an atom. From this point of view, *Dasein*\* understands the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities if and only if *Dasein*\* is ‘ontically responsible’ (cf. Haugeland, 2013). “Getting entities right requires a responsiveness to ostensible impossibilities in the current situation” and, further more, “the response must be a refusal to accept any current apparent impossibility” (Haugeland, 2013, p.201).

Haugeland gives three examples of impossibilities. **[A]** If we understand what electric current is (namely if we understand the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of the electric current), it is impossible to believe that something is carrying electric current but, at the same time, it does not generate a magnetic field; **[B]** if we understand what a hammer is (namely if we understand the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a hammer), it is impossible to think that something is a hammer but it breaks when strikes a nail. Finally, **[C]** if we understand what a child is (namely if we understand the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a child), it is impossible to believe that a child is, at the same time, at school and at home. In the first case, Haugeland deals with physical impossibility while, in the second case, he proposes an example of a (sort of) *ready-to-hand* impossibility (namely, an impossibility concerning the mode of being of a piece of equipment). The last example is about logical impossibility: it is

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**Being<sub>MET</sub>** “is that on the basis of which beings are already understood. Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is not a substance, process, an event, or anything that we normally come across; rather, it is a fundamental aspect of entities, viz. their intelligibility. (...) *Sinn* is usually translated as ‘meaning’ but that makes phrases like ‘the meaning of being’ sound too definitional. We use sense” (Dreyfus, 1990, p.xi-xii).

logically impossible for an entity to have, at the same time, inconsistent properties (for instance, *being at school* and *not being at school*). In all these cases, facing some kind of impossibility, *Dasein*\* finds something wrong with the entities that she encounters. Such a recognition should generate, at least in a ‘ontical responsible’ person, a refusal to accept that something impossible is happening. According to Haugeland, this is exactly the process, which determines the right meaning of entities.

This understanding of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** faces two main problems. The first worry represents a minor issue, which is relevant only for Haugeland’s interpretation. As we have already seen, his modal conception of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and his conception of responsibility are heavily grounded on the idea of impossibility and the refusal to accept it. As example [C] shows, among the many different accounts, Haugeland’s conception of impossibility seems to rely on the principle of non-contradiction as well. However, this specific interpretation cannot be correct for the whole trajectory of Heidegger’s philosophy: indeed, as we have argued in chapter 1, the later Heidegger rejects the idea that the principle of non-contradiction is an absolutely fundamental law for both logic and reality.<sup>23</sup> The second worry is a more substantial one and it is about the identity between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** [*Sein*] and meaning [*Sinn*\*], which does not seem to hold for the Heidegger before the *Kehre*\*. In paragraph number 34 of *Being and time* (1927), he defines ‘meaning’ as that in terms of which something can be understood. In this context, ‘understanding’ should not be primarily read as an epistemic activity but, following Haugeland, as an ability to discover the possibility of entities in terms of their modes of being. However, when Heidegger claims that the aim of his metaphysical enterprise is to grasp “the meaning [*Sinn*\*] of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Heidegger, 1927, p.1), he does not mean that his aim is to grasp the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, according to Heidegger himself, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot have **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.<sup>24</sup> More-

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<sup>23</sup>Someone may object that my critique is incorrect because Haugeland is only concerned with the first Heidegger (namely the Heidegger before the *Kehre*\*) and the first Heidegger seems to accept the principle of non-contradiction. This may be correct for the first part of Haugeland’s production but it is certainly incorrect for his late work. Indeed, as Haugeland himself claims in his *Dasein disclosed* (2013), his aim is to extend his modal interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to the late Heidegger as well. However, it is also true that, as we have specified in footnote 18 of chapter 1, the late Heidegger seems to accept only the contradiction of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Therefore, Haugeland may reply that his account of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** holds for all entities, but **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

<sup>24</sup>The situation may be different for the Heidegger after the *Kehre*\*. Assuming the interpretation proposed in the chapter 1, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and not **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) is an entity and not. It follows that,

over, Heidegger suggests that the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (namely what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is) is generated by “the wonder that a world is *worlding* around us at all, that there are entities rather than nothing, that entities are and even ourselves are (...)” (Heidegger, 1927, p.123). According to Heidegger, the problem is not the meaning of the world or the meaning of the entities around us but it is the brutal fact that the world and the entities around us actually *are*. And this is also what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are both concerned with: regardless the meaning of entities, entities are. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is exactly concerned with the ontological status of entities that *are* – it is concerned with the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of entities.

[2] The second account is presented by Kris McDaniel. According to McDaniel, the Heideggerian **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an analogical term because “it has a generic sense which, roughly, applies to objects of different sorts in virtue of those objects exemplifying very different features” (McDaniel, 2009, p.295). An example of this kind of term is the property of *being healthy*. Many things can be appropriately considered healthy: the relationship with my girlfriend is healthy, jogging is healthy and my liver is healthy. However, all those things are healthy in different ways. A relationship is healthy when the two partners are happy, jogging is healthy because it brings benefits to the body and my liver is healthy when it is properly functioning. From this point of view, *being healthy* can be understood as the disjunction of *being able to bring happiness*, *being able to bring health* and *being able to properly function*. Nevertheless, even though these examples show that, paraphrasing Aristotle, *being healthy* is said in many ways, it seems that, among all those meanings, there is also a unifying one. All these different ways of understanding the property of *being healthy* seem to have a grounding meaning in common (cf. McDaniel, 2009, p.294).<sup>25</sup>

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since all entities have **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself has **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and not. In this sense, accepting the identity between **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and meaning, it is possible to claim that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has a meaning. Nevertheless, this is not what the majority of authors supporting the identity between *Sein* and *Sinn* deals with, since they are always primarily concerned with the first Heidegger.

<sup>25</sup>According to McDaniel, another analogical term is *being part of* (cf. McDaniel, 2009, p.295-296). Against Lewis and the idea that *being part of* is always univocal, McDaniel defends compositional pluralism. He believes that there is more than one fundamental relation of part to whole. For instance, “the fundamental parthood relation that your hand bears to your body is not the fundamental parthood relation that this region of space-time bears to the whole of space-time” (McDaniel, 2009, p. 296). McDaniel discussed and defended compositional pluralism in his ‘Modal Realism with Overlap’ (2004)

McDaniel grounds the idea that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an analogical term on the evidence that Heidegger develops an extremely detailed phenomenology of entities, which includes the possibility of different modes of being. For instance, as we have seen, “Heidegger reserves the term *Existenz*<sup>\*</sup> for the kind of being had by entities like you and me [namely human beings]” (McDaniel, 2009, p.296) while other ways of being include *readiness-to-hand*, *unreadiness-to-hand* and *presence-at-hand* (cf. McDaniel, 2009, p.296-297). According to these examples, McDaniel seems to be right in claiming that Heidegger gives different phenomenological accounts of different kinds of entities. As Heidegger himself states, “there is a multiplicity of *modi existendi*” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151).

However, given the interpretation defended in chapter 1, someone may move two objections. [A] First of all, the examples discussed above do not necessarily show that there are different kinds of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words, from the fact that different entities are given to us in phenomenological different ways, it does not necessarily follow that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is given in different ways. If the interpretation of McDaniel is correct, the meaning of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in Heidegger’s metaphysics has to be understood as a disjunction whose disjuncts include *Existenz*<sup>\*</sup>, *ready-to-hand*, *present-at-hand*, *unready-to-hand* and all the other possible modes of being. Nevertheless, those examples simply show that entities with “a specific content” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151) and “a defined quiddity” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151) can be phenomenologically given to us in different ways. From this point of view, it may be the case that entities are different not because they enjoy different kinds of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but because they have specific features which make them phenomenologically distinguishable. Consider a hammer. Using Heidegger’s jargon, someone may say that it is only because some specific entities are pieces of equipment that they can hold different and distinct modes of being (a piece of equipment). Nevertheless, it is not **Being<sub>MET</sub>** that has a different meaning but it is the entity (in this case, the hammer) that has different features. What makes a hammer a different entity than a mathematical theorem is not the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of the hammer but the feature of ‘hammering’ which is exclusively proper to the hammer. Heidegger: “The hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ of the hammer. The kind of entity which a piece of equipment possesses – in which it manifests itself in its own right – we call ‘*readiness-to-hand*’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.98). The hammering itself delivers the phenomenological features that characterize the hammer – not a different **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Even though the

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and ‘Compositional Pluralism and Composition as Identity’ (2014).

**Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a hammer is exactly the same **Being<sub>MET</sub>** of a mathematical theory, the former is different from the latter because of the hammer's features (what Heidegger calls 'the hammering itself'). The lack of this specific feature makes a mathematical theorem not *ready-to-hand* and not particularly helpful in driving a nail either.

[B] The second issue is the following one: according to the ontological difference endorsed by Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. "The being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of entities is not an entity" (Heidegger, 1927, p.6). At this point, someone may say that, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, these different ways of being cannot be modes of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself. Given the interpretation defended in chapter 1, if **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has different modes, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is something, namely that entity which has different modes.<sup>26</sup> However, according to Heidegger himself, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be that entity which has different modes of being either.<sup>27</sup>

[3] Finally, let's discuss the third interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. This last interpreta-

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<sup>26</sup>Let me develop this thought in more details. According to my interpretation, Heidegger thinks that everything we can think about is an entity. Heidegger also thinks that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. If we support the view according to which Heidegger thinks that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be given in different ways, then we turn **Being<sub>MET</sub>** into that thing (aka entity) which is thought as *something* given in different ways. This is not possible because, according to Heidegger, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be that entity which is given in different ways either. This may lead us to think that, according to Heidegger, entities (and not **Being<sub>MET</sub>**!) are given in different ways. According to my interpretation, this argument works only for the first Heidegger, namely for the period in which he does not endorse any form of dialetheism about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. The situation is different when Heidegger endorses the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not. In this second case, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** both can and cannot be given in different ways. It cannot be given in different ways because only entities can be given in different ways and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. It can be given in different ways because it is an entity as well.

<sup>27</sup>McDaniel could reply that these objections (especially objection [B]) presuppose a strong account of intentionality which, according to McDaniel himself, Heidegger does not buy. McDaniel would be right in thinking so. However, the remarks presented here do not want to show that McDaniel's interpretation faces some issues: it only wants to show that, given what we have said in chapter 1, it is difficult to merge his interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as an analogical term with our interpretation of the second Heidegger. It may be also interesting to notice that the so-called second Heidegger is unsure about the analogical nature of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and he openly asks: "does being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] have such a vast range of meanings in virtue of its content transmitted to the single sentences and to the single [semantic] sphere it refers to? (...) Does being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] hide in itself all those meanings?" (Heidegger, 1966, p.100). Heidegger does not clearly answer. Finally, the analogical nature of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, which is clearly present in *Being and Time*, disappears in *Contribution to Philosophy* (1989a).

tion, which we take to be the correct one, was recently supported by Priest (2014a; 2014c; 2015). As we have already claimed, according to Heidegger, the meaning of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** “is only circumscribed by the presence, the appearance [*Anwesenheit\**]” of an entity (Heidegger, 1966, p.101). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not concerned with any specific property, attribute or feature of an entity but it simply concerns the “objecthood of an object or the *quidditas* of a *quid*” (Heidegger, 1978, p.151). “Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is what makes an entity an entity” (Heidegger, 1927, p.82). As for Meinong’s *Außersein*, Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the property of *being an object* of an object. To be an object, an entity, precisely is to instantiate *Außersein* and **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Moreover, as with Meinong’s *Außersein*, Heidegger’s **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an *ur*-property (or, being more faithful to the Heideggerian jargon, an *ur*-feature). As discussed above, we take an *ur*-property to be a property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. According to Heidegger himself, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is entailed by any other property (or feature) because, in order to be an entity with some features (for instance, being *ready-to-hand*, *unready-to-hand* or *present-at-hand*), an entity needs to be an entity. As such, it needs to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Thus, according to Heidegger, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is prior to any other property or feature, including the modes of being of each entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the *conditio sine qua non* of having other features besides the fact of simply *being an object*. As claimed in chapter 1, we assume this last interpretation of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**.

### 3.3 A summary of the comparison

Describing Meinong’s and Heidegger’s accounts of both intentionality and intentional objects, it seems evident that these two philosophers have a lot in common. However, before proceeding to discuss the major difference between them, let’s summarize the analogies.

First of all, we have shown that, according to Meinong and Heidegger, intentionality is always a relation which occurs between a subject’s mental state directed towards an object and the object towards which the subject’s mental state is directed. As we have seen, an intentional activity always has the feature of *being directed toward* something and, consequently, given an intentional activity, there is always an object or an entity towards which such an intentional activity is directed. Secondly, both Meinong and Heidegger think that there are different kinds of intentionality and that, for each kind of intentional

activity, there is a specific kind of intentional object or entity. Indeed, both Meinong and Heidegger think that there are two kinds of intentional activities. They agree that the first kind is an intellectual one (namely, a rational, philosophical, scientific and reflexive activity) but they disagree on the nature of the second activity. For Meinong, what is not an intellectual activity, it is an emotional one while, for Heidegger, it is simply practical. Moreover, for each one of these two categories, they also introduce different subcategories and, for each of these subcategories, there is a corresponding intentional object. For instance, Meinong thinks that the proper intentional object corresponding to a representation is an objectum but not an objective which is only the proper object of a thought. In the same way, Heidegger thinks that the entity corresponding to an intellectual activity is a thing but not a piece of equipment which is only proper of a practical activity.

Given similar accounts of intentionality, it is likely that there are similar accounts of intentional objects too. Nevertheless, in comparing Meinong's and Heidegger's positions, it is necessary to be careful because some terms can be misleading. On the one hand, Meinong thinks that any object has some properties and that the collection of these properties is called *Sosein*. On the other hand, Heidegger thinks that an entity has some specific features as well but, consistently with his account of intentionality, he also thinks that these features determine the 'modes of being' of the entity itself. For instance, if an entity  $X$  has the feature of *being a piece of equipment*, the mode of being of this entity (namely, the way in which *Dasein*\* phenomenologically encounters it) is *ready-to-hand*. On the contrary, if the same object  $X$  has the feature of *being a thing*, the mode of being of this entity is *present-at-hand*. Moreover, for both Meinong and Heidegger, there are different ways of existing. Nevertheless, they disagree about how objects or entities can exist in different ways. As we have already seen, the former believes that an object can exist (namely, it occupies a spatio-temporal region of the world) or simply subsist, while the latter draws a distinction between different kinds of existence grounded, not only on ontological, but also existential remarks. Indeed, only *Dasein*\* can enjoy *Existenz*\* (only *Dasein*\* can instantiate the property of *being existent* because only *Dasein*\* can ask the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) while everything else that is material or real, such as a table or a chair, simply has *Wirklichkeit*\* (it simply instantiates the property of *being material* or *being real*). Finally, they both think that there is something in virtue of which an object is an object. In Meinong's terminology, the property of *being an object*

is called *Außersein* while, in Heidegger's terminology, it is called **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Since it is important to remove any ambiguity, it is necessary to specify that what Meinong calls *Sein* (namely, existence and subsistence) corresponds to what Heidegger calls either *Existenz*\* or *Wirklichkeit*\* while what Heidegger calls **Being<sub>MET</sub>** corresponds to what Meinong calls *Außersein*.

### 3.4 Heidegger as a special case of Meinong's ontology

As we have already discussed in 1.1 and 1.3, Meinong thinks that everything has *Außersein* and that, taking *Außersein* to be the property of *being an object*, everything is an object. This means that, not only are my computer, Sherlock Holmes and the square triangle objects, but also that *Außersein* is an object as well. Indeed, *Außersein* is that intentional object to which we refer when we refer to the property of *being an object*. It is that object characterized as the *objecthood* of an object. Only at this point, we face a deep disagreement between Meinong and Heidegger. Indeed, while the former thinks that everything is an object, the latter believes that everything is an entity but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not. As we have seen, only after the *Kehre*\*, Heidegger claims that there is something, namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, that is an object and not. If Meinong thinks that *Außersein* (namely, the *objecthood* of an object) is an object itself (namely, that object characterized as the *objecthood* of an object), Heidegger (before the *Kehre*\*) believes that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (which is the analogous to Meinong's *Außersein*) is not an entity at all. The difference between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and entities is called ontological difference.

As we have discussed in the first chapter, Heidegger is aware that such an account of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** leads to two main problems. [1] In the first place, since every "mental compartment (...) is related and requires an object" (Heidegger, 1993, p.35) and since the actions of speaking and thinking are specific instantiations of mental compartments, it is impossible to speak and think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. [2] In the second place, as we have seen, it seems that Heidegger himself faces a contradiction. First, he assumes that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, second, he states that an entity is whatever we can refer to with an intentional activity. It should follow that it is not possible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** at all. However, since we do refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it seems exactly that the statement according to which we cannot refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** refers to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as something to which we cannot refer. In saying that we cannot refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, we

do refer to it. And that is Heidegger's contradiction.

Meinong does not directly face this kind of troubles because, according to his ontology, everything is an object including what makes all objects objects, that is the *objecthood* of all objects. Meinong does not endorse any ontological difference between the *objecthood* of an object and the object itself: he simply treats *Außersein* (which is the equivalent of the Heideggerian **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) as a normal object among other objects. If Heidegger is careful in not ascribing any **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, Meinong does not have any problem in claiming that *Außersein*, in virtue of its *being an object*, has *Außersein*. Since *Außersein* is an object, then it has the property of *being an object*.

Having said this, it is still true that, even without the endorsement of any ontological difference, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can represent a limit case in Meinong's ontology. Indeed, since Meinong shares with Heidegger the idea that any intentional activity is directed towards an object, this means that, if we think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is supposed to be an object as well. Moreover, since, according to Meinong, every time we refer to an object, we refer to something which has the properties that it is described as having, and given naïve *CP*, it is legitimate to think about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as something that is not an object.

Not only can Meinong's ontology accommodate Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but it also faces the same worries. [1] In the first place, as in the Heideggerian framework, given that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, it immediately becomes ineffable as well. Since objectives are always about objects, it is necessary to have objects in the first place in order to be able to express something (namely an objective) about them. It also follows that something that is not an object necessarily becomes ineffable because there are no objectives that can be about it. Since it is impossible to have an objective without having an object and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, then it is impossible to have an objective about it. It is ineffable.<sup>28</sup> [2] Secondly, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object and since every time we refer to something we refer to an object, then it should not be possible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Nevertheless, exactly when we claim that it is not possible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in

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<sup>28</sup>Someone can object that my argument about the ineffability of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in the meinongian framework is invalid because, according to Meinong, objectives are grounded in objecta and not in objects understood as *Gegenstand*. However, since both objectives and objecta are objects (understood as *Gegenstand*), it is impossible to have an objective about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object (understood as *Gegenstand*) and, therefore, it is not an objectum either.

virtue of its *not being an object*, we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** turning it into what it is not, namely an object. In other words, if Meinong is right in claiming that everything that instantiates, at least, a property is an object, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** should not instantiate any property at all. However, when we claim that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, we actually state that it instantiates, at least, the property of *not having properties* and exactly this property belongs to the description that characterizes it. In **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s *Sosein*, there is, at least, the property of *not having properties*.<sup>29</sup>

Given that everything we can predicate something of is an object and given that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not object, then nothing is predicable of it. But, of course, we already predicate something about **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, namely that nothing is predicable of it. As in Heidegger's metaphysics, this looks like an antinomy.

In his late production, Meinong himself presents a case which is similar to the Heideggerian one. In the second chapter of his *On Emotional Presentation* (1917), Meinong claims that there are some objects, which are 'defective' in the sense that they lack *Außersein* (cf. Kalsi, 1980). Since *Außersein* is the property of *being an object*, defective objects are not objects. Meinong is highly unclear about what defective objects are, but, given his own definition, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be rightly considered one of them. Since a defective object is something that lacks *Außersein*, namely something that is not an object, and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object either, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be considered a defective object.

According to the interpretation presented in the secondary literature, defective objects force Meinong to face a radical choice. On the one hand, he can abandon the idea that whatever we refer to is an object: in this way, he can accept the idea that, even though we refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not necessarily an object.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Meinong can abandon the idea that there is something like a defective object: in this way, he can accept the idea that every time we refer to something we refer to an object

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<sup>29</sup>In **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s *Sosein*, there are also other properties. For instance, according to what we have claimed in chapter 1, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities. It follows that, in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s *Sosein*, there is the property of *being the ground of all entities*.

<sup>30</sup>In the more recent debate, this idea was supported by Kalsi (1980). According to Kalsi, a thought or an expression which fails to denote any *Gegenstand* is a thought or an expression which denotes a defective object. We may rephrase Kalsi's idea as follows: 'to denote a defective object' is only a pleonastic way of expressing referential/denotation-failure. There is no metaphysical/ontological significance in defective objects.

because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an object too. In this second case, Meinong abandons the idea that there is something that is not an object.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, these two options do not seem satisfactory because they give up some fundamental aspects of Meinong's theory. If we embrace the first option, we give up one of the most crucial idea of Meinong, namely a strong account of intentionality. If we embrace the second option, we give up the intuitive idea that, since we can refer to something that is not an object, something is not an object. Nevertheless, if we follow the interpretation of the late Heidegger given in chapter 1, there is also a third possibility.

As Heidegger, Meinong can simply accept the inconsistent nature of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In this sense, following Heidegger, Meinong can solve the problem moving from **Being<sub>MET</sub>** to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** – accepting its inconsistent nature. Here, we take inconsistent objects to be objects that instantiate inconsistent properties. For instance, the square triangle instantiates the property of *being square* and the property of *not being square* (exactly in virtue of its *being a triangle*). In this case, the *Sosein* of a square triangle, as in the case of all the other inconsistent objects we can think about, contains inconsistent properties. If this is the case, it can be possible to deal with **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and, in general, defective objects) in a similar way. Since, as we have seen, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object (because it is characterized as such) and it is an object (because we can refer to it), **Being<sub>MET</sub>** needs to instantiate inconsistent properties, namely the properties of *being an object* and the property of *not being an object*. Having said that, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is metaphysically inconsistent in a peculiar way. Indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not simply an object with inconsistent properties (as all the other inconsistent objects are) but it is, at the same time, an object and not an object. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has *Außersein* (namely, it instantiates the property of *being an object*) and, at the same time, it does not have *Außersein* (namely it does not instantiate the property of *being an object*).

As we have previously argued, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is contradictory in a different and more radical way than 'normal' inconsistent objects because *Außersein* is an *ur*-property. We have defined an *ur*-property as the property the instantiation of which is entailed by any other property. Indeed, all inconsistent objects instantiate inconsistent properties. As

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<sup>31</sup>In the more recent debate, this idea was supported by Rapaport (1982). According to Rapaport, a defective object is, indeed, an object which has one special feature: it is not well-founded with respect to its intentional relation – its aboutness. Self-reference and loop of intentional relation are good examples of such non-well-foundedness.

such, they all have a *Sosein* – a *Sosein* containing inconsistent properties. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is different because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** both has a *Sosein* and does not. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an object and not an object, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** instantiates the property of *being an object* and it instantiates the property of *not being an object*. In other words, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has *Außersein* and it does not have *Außersein*. Since, as we have argued in Section 2.1.3, having *Außersein* is having a *Sosein*, it follows that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has a *Sosein* (because it is an object and all objects have both a *Sosein* and *Außersein*) and it does not have a *Sosein* (because it is not an object and what is not an object does not have a *Sosein* and *Außersein*). Moreover, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is also self-identical and not self-identical. Following Priest, *Außersein* is interpreted as the property of *being an object* and the property of *being an object* is interpreted as the property of *being-self-identical*. Now, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has *Außersein* (because it is an object) and it does not have *Außersein* (because it is not an object), **Being<sub>MET</sub>** instantiates the property of *being self-identical* and not.

To conclude, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an extreme case of Meinong's ontology for the following reason. According to Meinong, everything we can refer to with an intentional activity is an object: Sherlock Holmes, my laptop, the number three, a unicorn and the square triangle are all objects (only). However, Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** shows that Meinong's framework can accommodate also something that is an object and not an object as well. It is possible to have an object which is, so to speak, inside the totality of all objects and outside the totality of all objects. As we have discussed at the end of chapter 1 and using Heidegger's jargon, we can rephrase this idea as follows: **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is inside and outside the world (*Welt\**), namely the totality of everything that is.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>To conclude the present chapter, I would like to make it clear that, even though both Meinong's *Außersein* and Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** are interpreted as the *objecthood* of an object, there is a substantial difference between the two. The difference is that Heidegger's **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is transcendental and, thus, completely different than all the other entities and properties or features of entities. As I have already specified in the first paragraph of section 3.4, Meinong's *Außersein* is, on the contrary, not different from other entities or properties – it is just an entity among other entities, and a property among other properties.

## Chapter 4

# *Nichtsein*

**Overview.** In this third chapter, we show that Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to nothingness. Both of them are entities and not entities. As such, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, they belong to the totality of entities (that is Heidegger's world) and not. Continuing the comparison started in chapter 2, we also show that some neo-meinongians (such as Routley, Priest and Jacquette) have recently proposed some interesting accounts of nothingness as well. Finally, merging both Heideggerian and the neo-meinongian approach to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we present a paraconsistent mereological system which is able to deliver a formal explanation of the metaphysical idea presented. Such a model also shows that it is possible to have an inconsistent account nothingness without falling into logical triviality.

**Structure.** In **Section 3.1**, we argue that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to nothingness. In **Section 3.2**, we see how some neo-meinongian accommodate the idea that there is something that is not an object (such as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness). In **Section 3.3**, using both Heideggerian and neo-meinongian metaphysics, we develop a mereological theory that can reflect all the inconsistent metaphysical feature of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness. In **Section 3.4**, we present the paraconsistent logic employed by our mereological system, namely the weak relevant logic (DKQ). In **Section 3.5**, we present the proofs of the theorems discussed in the previous part of the chapter. In **Section 3.6**, we present some models which show that our mereological system is not logically trivial.

## 4.1 Heidegger and nothingness

As we have discussed in chapter 1 and footnote number 23 of chapter 2, Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has a lot of features: for instance, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the the ground of everything that is, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the feature of *being an object* of an object and, according to the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Following Heidegger, after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well. Heidegger thinks that, among all these features, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has also the feature of being identical to nothing. He does not mean that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not identical to anything, but he means that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to something, namely nothing. Indeed, according to Heidegger, 'nothing' refers to a thing and, as such, it is a substantive.

This position may strike contemporary philosophers as an obvious mistake. It is easy to suppose that Heidegger is simply confused because, as Carnap clarified, 'nothing' is a quantifier phrase, and not a noun phrase.<sup>1</sup> However, Heidegger is not confused at all. On the contrary, he is well aware that 'nothing' can be used as a quantifier, but he does not rule out the possibility of using 'nothing' as a noun phrase too. In *The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, he writes that "'Thinking about nothing' is ambiguous. First of all, it can mean 'not to think'" (Heidegger, 1978, p.3) In this first case, nothing is used as a quantifier: 'thinking about nothing' is understood as 'thinking about no thing'. Nevertheless, Heidegger also writes that: "secondly, 'thinking about nothing' can mean 'thinking about nothingness', which nonetheless means to think 'something'. In thinking of nothingness, or in the endeavor to think 'it', I am thoughtfully related to nothingness, and this is what thinking is about" (Heidegger, 1978, p.3). In this second case, nothingness is used as term which refer to something: 'thinking about nothing' is understood as 'thinking about a thing' called nothingness. From now on, we will use the term 'nothing' for the quantifier phrase and we will use the term 'nothingness' for the noun phrase.<sup>2</sup> At this point, even assuming that Heidegger is entitled to use nothingness

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<sup>1</sup>Carnap does not simply hold the position that nothing is a quantifier phrase but he also holds the position according to which nothing can *only* be a quantifier phrase. He famously writes: "The construction of the sentence (1) ['We seek the Nothing'] is simply based on the mistake of employing the word 'nothing' as a noun, because it is customary in ordinary language to use it in this form in order to construct a negative existential statement ... In a correct language, on the other hand, it is not a particular *name*, but a certain *logical form* of the sentence the serves this purpose" (Carnap, 1959, p.70).

<sup>2</sup>During a private conversation, Chris Mortensen accepted the possibility that the term 'nothing(ness)' refers to something. However, he raised an interesting issue, asking me how we know when 'nothing' is

as a noun phrase, two problems remain open. [1] What does Heidegger refer to when he refers to nothingness? [2] Why is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** identical to nothingness?

[1] Let's start addressing the first question. According to Heidegger, nothingness is "the negation of the totality of all entities" (Heidegger, 1967, p.63). This means that, if something is an entity, this something is not nothingness. In his *Contribution to Philosophy* (1989a), Heidegger proposes an interesting metaphor. Take the world, which is understood as the totality of all entities, and subtract from the world all entities. Of course, this is not enough to characterize nothingness as the negation of the totality of all entities, because something (that is an entity) is still left: what is left is a world, empty of any entity. Therefore, in order to obtain nothingness, it is necessary to remove the empty world too. Only at this point, we obtain nothingness. Moreover, from this characterization of nothingness, it also follows that nothingness itself is taken to be "the pure non-entity" (Heidegger, 1967, p. 63). If nothingness is the removal of all entities, nothingness is not an entity itself because, otherwise, it would be the presence of, at least, one entity, namely itself. As Heidegger claims: "nothingness is not a thing; it is not an entity" (Heidegger, 1967, p.71). Therefore, when Heidegger refers to nothingness, he refers to something that is not an entity.

[2] Let's continue discussing the second question. Both the first and the second Heidegger is explicit in claiming that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to nothingness. In agreement with Hegel, Heidegger claims that

Pure Being and pure Nothing are therefore the same. This proposition of Hegel is correct. Being and the Nothingness do belong together, not because both –from the point of view of the Hegelian concept of thought– agree in their indeterminateness and in immediacy, but rather because Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of *Dasein* which is held out into the nothing (Heidegger, 1967, p.75)

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used as a quantifier and when 'nothing' is used as a noun phrase. Unfortunately, I do not have a definite answer. My hypothesis is that we understand it only through the context. As Chris himself pointed out, when I blame my girlfriend because there is *nothing* in the fridge, I clearly do not mean to blame her because there is a scary metaphysical entity that gives me angst.

The same idea is defended in *The Question of Being*:

Only because the question ‘What is Metaphysics?’ thinks from the beginning of the climbing above, the transcendence, the *Being of being*, can it think of the negative of being, of *that* nothingness which just as originally is identical with Being (Heidegger, 1967, p.)

It is not easy to understand why Heidegger thinks that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness are identical. However, in some of his later works, he seems to support the following argument.

- [P1] **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is what it is that makes entities be  
 [P2] Nothingness is what it is that makes entities be  
 [C] Therefore, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is nothingness

The first premise is true by definition. On the one hand, as we discussed in chapter 1, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is characterized as the ground of all entities because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** makes all entities entities. All entities are entities (namely they are something and not nothing) in virtue of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. On the other hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood as the *being an entity* of an entity. Entities are entities exactly because they *are* something and not nothing – because they have **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, which makes them to be. It is more difficult to understand why the second premise is true. Heidegger seems to argue in the following way: nothingness makes entities be because an entity is (and can only be) in virtue of the fact that it is not nothing. In other words, an entity is something and not nothing because it stands out against nothingness. From this point of view, the necessary condition to have entities is to have nothingness too because, if there were no nothingness, entities could not stand against it. If there was no nothing, there could be no entities either. Finally, given the first premise and the second premise, the conclusion follows validly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>As Kris McDaniel pointed out in private conversation, the argument presented by Heidegger is valid if and only if what makes entities be is unique. However, Heidegger seems to be able to argue for the uniqueness of what makes entities be in the following way. Assuming the ontological difference, Heidegger believes that what makes entities be (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) is not itself an entity. If there is something other than **Being<sub>MET</sub>** that makes entities be, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and the something else that makes entities be are different. If they are different, they are two. If they are two, they are two different things (aka entities). However, this is not possible, because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not a thing (aka entity) in the

From the characterization of nothingness discussed above and from the fact that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, two important consequences follow. First of all, since nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and since nothingness is the result of removing all entities from the totality of all entities (namely, from Heidegger's world), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is what remains after removing all entities from the world as well.

Secondly, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, in talking and thinking about nothingness, Heidegger faces the same paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Since nothingness is not an entity and since every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, it should be impossible to refer to nothingness. However, we do refer to nothingness in saying that, for instance, nothingness is not an entity. Moreover, since nothingness is not an entity and since every time we refer to something we refer to an entity, as soon as we claim that nothingness is not an entity, we turn nothingness into what nothingness is not. As in the case of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, it seems impossible to either think or speak about nothingness without facing a contradiction. Nothingness is not an entity (because it is characterized as such) and it is an entity (because we refer to nothingness and whatever we refer to is an entity). The paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the same paradox of nothingness.<sup>4</sup>

As we have discussed in chapter 1, the early Heidegger (namely the Heidegger before the *Kehre*\*) thinks that, exactly because referring to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** leads us to face a contradiction, talking and thinking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is meaningless. Of course, the same position holds for nothingness too. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, he states that "he who speaks of nothingness does not know what he is doing. In speaking of nothingness, he makes it into something. (...) He contradicts himself. But a contradictory discourse offends against the fundamental rule of discourse" (Heidegger, 1966, p.23). Since "nothingness is illogical", "nothingness is contradictory and, thus, senseless" (Heidegger, 196, p. 113). Nevertheless, after the *Kehre*\*, Heidegger changes his mind claiming that the

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first place. Similar arguments can be found in *Contribution to Philosophy* (1989a, Paragraph 146). Of course, I am not endorsing this argument. I am just trying to show that Heidegger may have a reason to endorse the uniqueness of what makes entities be.

<sup>4</sup>Heidegger points out that even the question of nothingness (namely, what is nothingness?), exactly like the question of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely, what is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**?), is irreparably compromised because, when we ask what nothingness is, we assume that nothingness is an entity of which it is possible to ask something. However, since nothingness is not an entity, nothingness cannot be that entity of which we ask about. Heidegger explains this idea in the following way: "What is nothingness? Our very first approach to the question has something unusual about it. In our asking, we posit the nothing [namely nothingness] (...) as a being. But that is exactly what it is distinguished from" (Heidegger, 1967, p.62)

truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the *Ereignis\**, namely the event in which **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is revealed as what is both an entity and not an entity. Heidegger is aware that, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is identical to nothingness, the *Ereignis\** is also the event in which nothingness is revealed as what is an entity and what is not an entity. On the one hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is outside the world (namely outside the totality of all entities) because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, and, at the same time, it is inside the world (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well). On the other hand, since nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, nothingness itself is both outside the world (because it is not an entity) and inside the world (because it is an entity). It is also important to remember that the late Heidegger thinks that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** can be understood as the property of *being self-identical*: all entities are self-identical because all entities are entities. This means that, in the *Ereignis\**, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical (because all entities are self-identical, including **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) and not self-identical (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, as such, it is not self-identical either). Finally, since nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, nothingness is both self-identical and not self-identical as well.

The late Heidegger thinks that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are both entities and not entities. They are both part of the totality of all entities because they are entities and, at the same time, they are not part of the totality of all entities because they are not entities. Moreover, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are both self-identical and not. According to Heidegger, the *Ereignis\**, namely the event in which *Dasein\** reaches the truth of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, is exactly the realization that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are contradictory. On the one hand, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are outside the world (the totality of everything that is) because nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the result of removing all entities from the world. As such, they are not entities either because, otherwise, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** would not be the result of removing all entities but the presence of, at least, one entity, namely themselves. On the other hand, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are inside the world (the totality of everything that is) because we refer to them and everything we refer to is an entity, including nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

In what follows, we see how the current debate in neo-meinongianism can help us to have a better metaphysical understanding of Heidegger's notions of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Moreover, we provide a mereological system that can formally make sense of these ideas. We discuss the formal structure of Heidegger's *Ereignis\** and we show

that, even though such a structure is inconsistent, it is not logically trivial.

## 4.2 Neo-Meinongianism and nothingness

As we have shown in chapter 2, the problem of Heidegger can be framed in Meinong's terms as well. Nevertheless, beside some cryptic remarks about the so-called defective objects (namely objects without *Außersein*), Meinong himself does not give any clear account of what a 'non-entity' (such as Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is. On the contrary, a recent debate about nothingness (namely about what is not an object) has taken place among neo-meinongians. More specifically, in the current debate, it is possible to find three neo-meinongian characterizations of nothingness.

[1] The first characterization is proposed by Graham Priest. He grounds his account on the intuition according to which nothingness is “*absolutely nothing*: the absence of everything” (Priest 2014b, p. 151). From this intuition, it also follows that, because nothingness “is the absence of all things”, nothingness itself “is nothing. It is no thing, no object” (Priest 2014b, p. 151). Priest tries to do justice to this idea, characterizing nothingness as the mereological sum of everything that is contained in the empty set. First of all, since Priest (2014a, 2014b, 2014c) takes *being an object* as *being self-identical*, he thinks that what is not an object is not self-identical. Secondly, working under the assumption that the empty set contains not self-identical elements, it follows that the empty set contains no thing at all. Because the empty set contains non-self-identical elements and what is not self-identical is not an object, the empty set is indeed empty. This is also the reason why, if we try to collect what is contained in the empty set, we get no things at all – the absolute absence of everything, namely nothingness. Therefore, Priest takes nothingness to be the mereological sum of everything that is contained in the empty set. Fusing no things, he gets nothingness.

[2] The second characterization (which is very similar to the first one) is proposed by Richard Routley. While Priest infers the *non-objecthood* of nothingness from the idea that nothingness is the absence of everything, Routley (appealing to the naïve *CP*) directly characterizes nothingness as that which is not an object in the first place. He thinks that nothingness is not something and that something is not nothingness. Consistently with

this idea, in his unpublished work, Richard Routley claims that “nothingness is not an item” (Sylvan, Box23). In Routley’s terminology, ‘item’ is a synonym of ‘object’ or ‘entity’. Unfortunately, there is no further characterization of nothingness because Routley has never had the possibility to work out the details of this idea due to his premature death. Note that, even though both Priest and Routley reach the conclusion that nothingness is not an object, they understand objecthood in a somewhat different way. While Priest takes, as we have seen, *being an object* as *being self-identical*, Routley takes *being an object* as *being describable* (Sylvan, Box23). Consequently, since nothingness is not an object and whatever is describable is an object, then “nothingness is undescrivable” (Sylvan, Box23).

**[3]** Finally, the third and last characterization is proposed by Dale Jacquette (2013; 2015). He follows the intuition according to which nothingness is simply that object that we refer to (because we do refer to it right now!) when, sitting around a table, we discuss Sartre’s *le Neant* or, during a philosophical conference, we try to answer the following question: why is there something and not nothing? Thus, he takes nothingness as intendable. But he also claims that it is nothing more than this. It has “no predicational frills” (Jacquette, 2013, p. 108), since if it had such a frill as *being a cat*, then it would no longer be nothingness, but something which is a cat. Consequently, nothingness is something which has only a minimal property required for it to be intendable. Jacquette characterizes nothingness as an object with only one (constitutive) property, that is the property of *being-intendable and nothing more*.

Given these three different ways of describing nothingness, some important consequences follow. First of all, working with a meinongian account of intentionality, the first two characterizations of nothingness (namely **[1]** and **[2]**) directly lead to the same paradox faced by Heidegger. Since every time we refer to something, we refer to an object, then, in saying that nothingness is not an object, we refer to nothingness turning it into its opposite, namely an object. According to these definitions, nothingness is not an object, but, at the same time, since we refer to it, nothingness is an object as well. For some philosophers, this contradiction is certainly unacceptable. However, this is not the case for Priest and Routley: as the late Heidegger accepts the contraction implied by **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, they accept the contradiction implied by nothingness. According to Rout-

ley, since “for whatever is not an item is thereby an item”, nothingness is an item and not an item as well. (Sylvan, Box23). According to Priest, nothingness “is the most strange, contradictory thing. It both is and is not an object; it both is and is not something” (Priest 2014b, p. 151). Both Priest and Routley share the idea that, in Heidegger’s jargon, nothingness (as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) reveals itself as what is an entity and not an entity. Secondly, contrary to Priest and Routley, Jacqueline does not need to buy any inconsistency because, as we have already outlined, he simply characterizes nothingness as that which is an object – an object whose (constitutive) property is only the property of *being intendable and nothing more*. Consequently, he avoids any paradoxical situation *à la* Heidegger. As such, it cannot be used to explain the account of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** defended by Heidegger after the *Kehre*\*.<sup>5</sup>

### 4.3 Nothingness as an inconsistent object

After discussing which neo-meinongian accounts of nothingness are compatible with the Heideggerian one, we propose our own account, which reflects the Heideggerian idea that both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities and not. Such an account is grounded on the conditional claim that, if we assume the Heideggerian (and the Meinongian) thesis about intentionality according to which everything we refer to is an object, then both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, characterized as the absence of everything (or characterized as *being not an object*), are contradictory (namely they are objects and not objects). Starting from the idea that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities or objects, Heidegger faces the same paradox that the neo-meinongians Priest and Routley have dealt with. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities and since, according to Heidegger, everything we can think about (refer to) is an entity, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities as well. Nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities and not entities at the same time. Thus, they are inconsistent entities.

Nevertheless, in order to formally describe Heidegger’s nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we start our investigation from a characterization of nothingness and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** that

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<sup>5</sup>It is important to remark that, if our aim is to characterize something that is *not* an object, Jacqueline’s strategy fails. Indeed, according to him, nothingness is an object – more precisely, it is an object with only one property, namely the property of *being intendable and nothing more*. There are no doubts that Jacqueline’s nothingness is a weird object: most objects have more properties than the only property of *being intendable and nothing more*. However, Jacqueline’s nothingness is still an object.

is different than the one presented by Priest and Routley. On the one hand, as with Priest, we follow the intuition according to which nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the absence of all entities. As Heidegger himself has claimed, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are what we get when, given Heidegger's world (namely the domain of all entities), we remove from it every entity. What is left is exactly no thing at all – nothingness and, thus, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. It follows that, as we have already anticipated, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not things because, otherwise, they would be the presence of something, namely themselves. On the other hand, diverging from Priest but following Heidegger, we do not take nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** to be the mereological sum of everything that is contained in the empty set, but we characterize them as the complement of totality, which is exactly what we get when we have no objects at all. As Heidegger's world, the totality is what fuses (or collects) all entities together. Such a characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** perfectly fits the Heideggerian one: according to Heidegger, both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the result of emptying the world and, as we have already discussed in the previous chapters, Heidegger takes the world to be the totality of all entities.

At this point, someone may have some methodological concerns. Indeed, why and how did we move from Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** to mereological notions such as 'fusion', 'complement' and 'totality'? The answer is straightforward. Let's start saying that, if we work under the Heideggerian assumption that 'nothingness' and '**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**' are terms which refer to something, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** themselves are something which require a metaphysical explanation. In other words, we have moved from Heidegger's ontology to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because exactly this ontology is the *conditio sine qua non* to even start to be worried about something like nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Indeed, only because of the assumptions of Heidegger's philosophy, are we able to investigate what nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are and how nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are characterized. Having said that, our characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** also employs some notions that seem to naturally belong to a mereological framework and, as such, this requires a formal explanation too. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the absence of all things, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any '*part*': they are perfectly empty. What is perfectly empty is the opposite of the '*totality*', which, on the contrary, is perfectly full because it '*fuses*' everything. From this point of view, it is natural to take nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as the '*com-*

*plement*' of the totality. This is how we have moved from nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** to mereological concepts.

According to Heidegger's characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, if we subtract each object from the totality of all objects, what is left is no thing at all – nothing, indeed. Since, according to Heidegger, nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, what is left is **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too. Then, consistently with Heidegger's understanding of what an object is, let's define the totality (or, in Heidegger's jargon, the world) as the mereological sum of all objects. As we have already discussed in the Section 2.2.2, according to Heidegger, the totality sums up objects that exist (namely objects that have *Existenz*<sup>\*</sup>, such as human beings), objects that are material or real (namely objects that have *Sachheit*<sup>\*</sup>, such as the Empire State Building) and objects that neither exist nor are material or real (namely abstract objects, such as prime numbers).

At this point, let's note two important considerations. First of all, such a universal mereological sum collects all intentional objects regardless of their ontological status: everything (literally everything!) is collected in the totality. This is crucial because, if this is not the case, the complement of the totality would still have as its parts some nonexistent objects such as Pegasus and Sherlock Holmes. However, this is not possible because nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not things (or objects) and, as such, they do not have any object as their part, not even nonexistent things like Pegasus and Sherlock Holmes. Secondly, given the metaphysics previously introduced, since it is possible to refer to the complement of the totality, the complement of the totality becomes an object as well. If this is the case, then the complement of the totality has to be a part of the totality too. From this point of view, the complement of the totality represents Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because it is the absence of all objects and it is not an object itself. However, since everything we refer to is an object and since we refer to the complement of the totality as well, then the complement of the totality is an object too. Since the totality collects all objects (since, in Heidegger's terms, the world contains everything that is), the complement of the totality is part of the totality too. As we have seen in chapter 1, this idea is described by Heidegger as the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, namely the event of the truth of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. According to this event, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the complement of the totality) are not part of the world (which is the totality) because they are not entities. However, at the same time, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are part of the world because they are entities too.

In what follows, we present a mereological system which formally explains Heidegger's *Ereignis*\*. This mereological system (called **PM** + **(\*)**) introduces a complement of the totality which has all the metaphysical features previously ascribed to Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. As we will see later on, in **PM** + **(\*)**, the complement of the totality is not identical to the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals. However, only the complement of the totality can represent Heidegger's nothingness or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. because we assume that another property of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the property of *being disjointed from the totality*. Indeed, according to the ontological difference, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities at all, both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any part in common with the world (with the totality collecting all entities). Now, since the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals is not disjoint from the totality in **PM** + **(\*)**, only the complement of the totality can represent Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** exactly in virtue of its being disjointed from the totality. <sup>6</sup>

#### 4.4 Paraconsistent mereology

In this section, we try to do justice to the metaphysical story presented above, developing two theories of mereology which include the complement of the totality. To begin with, we discuss some of the basic notions employed in our formal systems.

First of all, let us fix the notion of totality. The totality (or Heidegger's world) is the sum of all objects. Then, what is an object? Following Heidegger, we assume that, if it is possible to refer to  $x$ ,  $x$  is an object. However, mereology lacks such an intentional vocabulary. In order to accommodate this lack, we simply appeal to Heidegger's account of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** according to which *being an object* is defined as *being self-identical*.<sup>7</sup> Given such a definition of objecthood, the totality is defined as the sum of the self-identicals.

Secondly, let us cast some light on the notion of the complement of the totality. In standard mereology, the complement of an object  $x$  is defined as the sum of all objects disjoint from  $x$ : we adopt this standard definition of complement. Intuitively speaking, the complement of  $x$  is the remainder of the subtraction of  $x$  from the totality. Follow-

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<sup>6</sup>The following technicalities are the extension of a co-authored work with Naoya Fujikawa.

<sup>7</sup>Heidegger's understanding of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as *being self-identical* is discussed in the first chapter. For more details, see Section 1.1, point [3].

ing Heidegger, if we subtract everything from the totality, what is left is nothingness or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Thus, the complement of the totality is a good candidate for a mereological implementation of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** characterized as the absence of everything. So far, the story is straightforward. But a twist is required here. In mereology, an object has its complement if and only if something is not its part. Therefore, the totality has its complement if and only if something is not a part of the totality. However, the totality is the sum of every objects and, thus, everything is its part. Therefore, in classical mereology (and in any other mereology whose base logic is not paraconsistent), nothing is not a part of the totality, and the totality doesn't have a complement. To obtain the complement of the totality, we take two nonstandard steps. First, we assume that something is not a part of the totality (even though it is). Second, to accommodate the contradiction raised by this assumption, we adopt a paraconsistent logic as the basic logic of our theories.

#### 4.4.1 Empty objects, classic mereology and Weber and Cotnoir's system

Let's begin by explaining the reason why Weber and Cotnoir's mereological system gives us an appropriate background to develop a formal theory of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, understood as the complement of the totality.

[1] The first reason is concerned with the broader philosophical aim of Weber and Cotnoir's system, which is, somehow, similar to ours. In their 'Inconsistent Boundaries' (2015), Weber and Cotnoir try to give an account of empty objects. As they have pointed out, empty objects are often described through the inevitable usage of the empty set; nonetheless,  $\emptyset$  (however it is defined) is still something and, as such, "this is no more mysterious than the number zero" (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p.1273). Weber and Cotnoir aim for something more radical than an object (an empty set) which is empty of any element: they want an empty object which is genuinely, undoubtably empty of any thing, including itself. They aim at "an empty object, which is *nothing*" (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p.1279). Now, the Heideggerian characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** presented above perfectly fits the aim of Weber and Cotnoir's system. Since they take empty objects to be *nothing* at all, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are the empty objects *par excellence*. What is more empty than something that is not an object

at all? What is more empty than nothingness itself? We have decided to work in the framework introduced by Weber and Cotnoir because, according to Heidegger's characterization, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are just a particularly extreme version of an empty object. The reason why Weber and Cotnoir did not discuss nothingness as well will be clear later on.

[2] The second reason why we have decided to engage with Weber and Cotnoir's mereology is concerned with purely technical issues. As we have claimed before, the late Heidegger (namely the Heidegger after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>) endorses the idea that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are inconsistent because they are characterized as *both* an object and not an object. This means that, as in the case of Weber and Cotnoir's 'Inconsistent Boundaries' (2015), a paraconsistent mereology is necessarily required. However, to see why this system is particularly suitable for our purposes, we need to start discussing mereology in more detail. Let's begin with a brief introduction to classical mereology.

Following Weber and Cotnoir (2015), we do not start taking into consideration the standard presentations of 'general extensional mereology' (**GEM**) in Casati and Varzi (1999), or that of 'classical extensional mereology' (**CEM**) in Simons (1987), but an equivalent non-standard axiomatization proposed by Hovda (2009, Part 4). Weber and Cotnoir made this choice because, as they claim (2015), Hovda's axiom system is the best one, if we want to go from a classical setting to a paraconsistent one. Such an axiomatization is composed of three main parts. The first part is the axiomatization of classical logic (let's call them **HMO**) with identity =, and with  $\supset$  the material conditional. The second part is a set of definitions. In Hovda's mereological system, *Parthood*,  $\leq$ , is taken to be primitive. Moreover, two objects overlap when they have at least one part in common and two objects are disjoint when they do not have any part in common. [a] *Overlap* and [b] *Disjoint* are formally defined in the following way

$$(1) \text{ a. } x \bullet y =_{\text{df}} \exists z(z \leq x \wedge z \leq y)$$

$$\text{ b. } x \uparrow y =_{\text{df}} \neg x \bullet y$$

Finally, *Fusion*, namely the mereological sum of two or more parts, is taken to be the  $\leq$ -least upper bounds of the parts that are fused together. Formally, it is expressed in the following way:

$$(2) \text{ lub}(x, A) =_{\text{df}} \forall y(A \supset y \leq x) \wedge (\forall w \forall y(A \supset y \leq w) \supset x \leq w)$$

This means that a *lub* of the As is just an object that has all the As as parts (i.e. an upper bound), and it is part of any other upper bound of the As (i.e. least). The third and last part is an axiomatization of classical mereology presented as follows:

$$\mathbf{HM1} \quad \forall x(x \leq x)$$

$$\mathbf{HM2} \quad \forall x \forall y((x \leq y \wedge y \leq x) \supset x = y)$$

$$\mathbf{HM3} \quad \forall x \forall y \forall z((x \leq y \wedge y \leq z) \supset x \leq z)$$

$$\mathbf{HM4} \quad \forall x(\exists y(y \not\leq x) \supset \exists z(z \not\leq x \wedge \forall y((y \not\leq x \supset y \leq z) \wedge (y \not\leq z \supset y \leq x))))$$

$$\mathbf{HM5} \quad \exists x A \supset \exists z \text{lub}(z, A)$$

$$\mathbf{HM6} \quad \exists x \exists y(y \neq x) \supset \neg \exists x \forall y(x \leq y)$$

From axiom **HM1**, **HM2** and **HM3**, it follows that *Parthood* is reflexive, antisymmetric and transitive; thus, it is partial order. From axiom **HM4**, it follows that, given an object  $x$ , there is an other object,  $\bar{x}$ , namely the complement of  $x$ , made up of all and only the objects that do not overlap  $x$ . However, from **HM4**, it also follows that, if the object  $x$  is the totality (namely the mereological sum of everything), then  $x$  does not have a complement. According to axiom **HM5**, given some arbitrary objects As, there is always a fusion collecting these objects As. Finally, since axiom **HM6** claims that there is nothing which is a part of everything, there are no empty objects.

For both Weber and Cotnoir's aim and ours, Hovda's mereological system presented here is unsatisfactory because it is based on classical logic (**HM0**). On the one hand, in their paper, Weber and Cotnoir give an inconsistent account of boundaries and, on the other hand, we propose an inconsistent account of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In both cases, a paraconsistent logic is required in order not to fall into logical triviality. Thus, in order to obtain a paraconsistent mereological system which is able to deal with contradictions without any logical explosion, Weber and Cotnoir presents the following revision of **HM0** - **HM6**. Call this new paraconsistent system PM. The language of PM is the standard first-order language with identity, a two place predicate which represents the parthood relation,  $\leq$ , and a sentential constant,  $t$ . PM consists of the following axioms:

**PM0** Axioms of the weak relevant logic DKQ

**PM1**  $\forall x(x \leq x)$

**PM2**  $\forall x \forall y((x \leq y \wedge y \leq x) \leftrightarrow x = y)$

**PM3**  $\forall x \forall y \forall z((x \leq y \wedge y \leq z) \rightarrow x \leq z)$

**PM4**  $\forall x(\exists y(y \not\leq x) \mapsto \exists z(z \Vdash x \wedge \forall y((y \Vdash x \rightarrow y \leq z) \wedge (y \Vdash z \rightarrow y \leq x))))$

**PM5**  $\exists x A \mapsto \exists z \text{lub}(z, A)$

**PM6**  $\exists x \exists y(y \neq x) \mapsto \neg \exists x \forall y(x \leq y)$

**PM7**  $\forall x \forall y(x \leq y \mapsto \forall z(z \bullet x \rightarrow z \bullet y))$

**PM0** refers to the axiomatization of DKQ, which appears in Appendix 1. For the moment, it is enough to mention that DKQ is a weak relevant logic which has been used to develop, for instance, paraconsistent set theory (cf. Priest, 2006). One feature of this logic is that  $\rightarrow$  is a relevant conditional, which is detachable and contraposable. In the application proposed by Cotnoir and Weber, this logic has also an enthymematic conditional,  $\mapsto$ , which is defined by using a  $t$ -constant. The  $t$ -constant is a constant which satisfies (3) for any  $A$ .<sup>8</sup>

$$(3) A \dashv\vdash t \rightarrow A$$

$\mapsto$  is defined as follows:

$$(4) A \mapsto B =_{\text{df}} A \wedge t \rightarrow B$$

$\mapsto$  is detachable but not contraposable.

By using the enthymematic conditionals, fusion,  $\leq$ -least upper bound, is defined as follows.

$$(5) \text{lub}(x, A) =_{\text{df}} \forall y(A \mapsto y \leq x) \wedge (\forall w \forall y(A \mapsto y \leq w) \mapsto x \leq w)$$

<sup>8</sup>In Weber and Cotnoir (2015), it is not explicit why they introduce the enthymematic conditional. However, it is clear that such a conditional it is introduced to be able to problem the non-triviality of their axiomatic system. Without the enthymematic conditional, the non-triviality proof of PM does not work.

The notions of overlap and disjoint are defined in the same way as (1).

So, **PM1** - **PM7** axiomatize Weber and Cotnoir's paraconsistent mereology. As in the case of **HM1** - **HM7**, from axiom **PM1** (which is *Reflexivity*), **PM2** (which is *Antisimmetry*) and **PM3** (which is *Transitivity*), it follows that parthood is partial order. According to **PM5**, given some arbitrary objects  $A$ s, there is always a fusion collecting these objects  $A$ s while, according to **PM6**, nothing is a part of everything. Finally, **PM7** claims that, if an object (let's call it  $x$ ) is a part of another object (let's call it  $y$ ), then all the parts that overlap with  $x$  overlap with  $y$  as well. **PM7** is a theorem of classical mereology, which nonetheless fails to be provable in this paraconsistent mereological system. For our purpose, the problem is that, even though **PM4** gives De Morgan complements,  $\bar{x}$  for every  $x$  except the totality. Therefore, as in the case of **HM4**, the totality does not have any complement. Since we define Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as the complement of the totality, a complement of the totality is required. For this reason, in the following sections, on the basis of Weber and Cotnoir's system, we explore two theories of mereology which have the complement of the totality, comparing them with Heidegger's account of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

#### 4.4.2 **PM+(\*)**

Let us call our first theory **PM+(\*)**. As stated above, **PM+(\*)** is based on **PM** in Weber and Cotnoir (2015): it consists of all axioms of **PM** and the following axiom, which claims that something is outside the totality.

$$(*) \exists x \exists y (x \not\leq y \wedge \text{lub}(y, z = z))$$

Now, it is easy to see that  $(*)$  immediately introduces an inconsistency in the system. Indeed, since everything is collected in the totality and since this axiom stipulates that there is something outside the totality, **PM+(\*)** already contains an inconsistency. Moreover, in our theory,  $(*)$  allows us to introduce the complement of any  $x$ , including the totality. Let us write the  $\leq$ -least upper bound of  $A$  as  $\text{lub}[x|A]$ .<sup>9</sup> Then,  $\text{lub}[x|x = x]$  is the totality, since, given **PM1** and **PM2**, everything is self-identical. The complement of  $x$  is defined as follows:

$$(6) \bar{x} =_{\text{df}} \text{lub}[y|y \not\leq x]$$

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<sup>9</sup>That is, ' $\text{lub}[x|A]$ ' is the term which uniquely satisfies  $\text{lub}(x, A)$ .

Given this definition,  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ , that is, the complement of the totality, is legitimately introduced in  $PM+(\ast)$ . The definite description ‘ $lub[x|A]$ ’ is licensed if and only if something uniquely satisfies  $lub(x, A)$ . The uniqueness of  $\leq$ -least upper bound is already proven by Weber and Cotnoir (see Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1280). Given PM5, to show that something is a  $\leq$ -least upper bound of  $As$ , it is enough to show that something satisfies  $A$ . Now, from  $(\ast)$ , something is not a part of  $lub[x|x=x]$ . This and PM4 entail that something is disjoint from  $lub[x|x=x]$ , that is, something satisfies the defining condition of  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Thus, we have it.

At this point, it is worthwhile to mention Weber and Cotnoir’s argument against the complement of the Totality. Suppose that  $\perp$  is an absurdity constant such that for any  $A$ ,  $\perp \rightarrow A$ . Taking the complement of the totality as  $lub[x|\perp]$ , they deny the complement of the totality, since ‘nothing satisfies’  $\perp$  ‘on pain of triviality’ (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1283). Our theories reflect this consideration to the extent that they lack  $lub[x|\perp]$ : because  $PM+(\ast)$  and  $PM+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)$ , which is introduced in section 3.3.5, are non-trivial (see Appendix 3), nothing satisfies  $\perp$  and, thus, there is nothing which is the  $lub[x|\perp]$  there. However, this doesn’t mean that  $PM+(\ast)$  lacks the complement of the totality defined as  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Indeed, their non-triviality shows that  $x \not\leq lub[x|x=x]$  is not absurd in them: it is not a theorem that for any  $A$ ,  $x \not\leq lub[x|x=x] \rightarrow A$ .

Now we have the totality and its complement in mereology. Let us next see how they behave in  $PM+(\ast)$ . In particular, in the next section, we examine some theorems concerning  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  in  $PM+(\ast)$  and show that they adequately reflect metaphysical considerations about Heidegger’s nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

#### 4.4.3 Theorems of $PM+(\ast)$

The first set of theorems of  $PM+(\ast)$  is (7) (proofs of (7)s are found in Appendix 1).

- (7) a.  $\forall x(x \leq lub[x|x=x])$   
 b.  $\forall x(\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq x)$   
 c.  $\forall x(x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]})$   
 d.  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \not\leq lub[x|x=x]$

It is possible to interpret the (7)s in two ways. The first interpretation is purely concerned with mereology. From this point of view, we can say that (7a) and (7b) shows that, as it is expected, the Totality is the top element and that its complement is the bottom element. In particular, (7b) also shows that the complement of the Totality is a null entity: in mereology, the bottom is a null entity in the sense that, summing up the null entity with any object  $x$ , we always obtain  $x$ .<sup>10</sup> Finally, (7d) says that the complement of the totality is disjoint from the totality.

The second interpretation makes use of Heidegger's metaphysics. Indeed, the (7)s reflect some features of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. On the one hand, (7a) shows that Heidegger's world (namely the totality of all entities) collects everything that is (an entity). On the other hand, (7c) shows that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any part and, therefore, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are completely empty. They are not entities at all. Moreover, exactly because nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities, according to (7b), they can be part of everything. As we have previously explained, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are *non-entities* (cf. Heidegger, 1967), if we sum them up with an entity  $x$ , we just obtain  $x$ . Finally, according to (7d), since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not entities, they are both disjoint from the totality of all entities. Following the interpretation given in the first chapter, as Plotinus' One and Saint John's God, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are both beyond the world or, so to speak, completely outside from the world (understood as the totality of all objects). This first set of theorems captures the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** when they are simply considered not entities.

The second set of theorems of PM+(\*) consists of the negations of (7) (proofs of (8)s are found in Appendix 1 as well).

- (8) a.  $\neg \forall x (x \leq \text{lub}[x|x=x])$   
 b.  $\neg \forall x (\overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} \leq x)$   
 c.  $\neg \forall x (x \not\leq \overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]})$   
 d.  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} \not\Downarrow \text{lub}[x|x=x]$

---

<sup>10</sup>This is because  $x \leq y$  iff  $x \sqcup y = y$ , where  $\sqcup$  is the binary sum operation defined as  $\text{lub}[z : z = x \vee z = y]$  (see Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1281).

Once again, it is possible to interpret the (8)s in two ways. Let's start with the interpretation that is purely concerned with mereological aspects. (8a) shows that there is something that is not part of the totality of all objects. (8b) claims that is not the case that the complement of the totality is part of every object and (8c) shows that the complement of the totality is not perfectly empty. Finally, according to (8d), the complement of the totality is not disjoint from the totality.

The (8)s reflect some features of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as well. According to (8a), there is something that is not part of Heidegger's world (understood as the totality of all entities): indeed, Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities (because everything we refer to is an entity and we refer to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**); nonetheless, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not belong to Heidegger's world (understood as the totality of all entities) because they are characterized as something that is not an entity and, as such, they do not belong to the totality of all entities. (8c) shows that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not perfectly empty and, as such, they are entities. Finally, (8d) claims that, exactly because both Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities, they are not disjoint from the world (from the totality of all objects). This second set of theorems captures the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** when they are considered as entities or, using Heidegger's expression, as something that *are*.

Finally, in the present context, the complement of the totality (namely nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is self-identical and not self-identical (proofs are in Appendix 2).

$$(9) \quad \text{a. } \overline{lub[x|x=x]} = \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$$

$$\text{b. } \overline{lub[x|x=x]} \neq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$$

From an Heideggerian point of view, these last results make sense as well. Indeed, as we have already seen, we take the complement of the totality to be nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Following Heidegger's account of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we also interpret the property of *being self-identical* as the property of *being an object*. At this point, since, according to the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are entities and not entities, both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (represented as the complement of the totality) are self-identical (because they are entities) and not self-identical (because they are not entities). This is what is shown in (9).

In this way,  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  contains not a few contradictions. Someone may worry that  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  is trivial in the sense that everything is true in it. However,  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  is not trivial. We show the non-triviality of  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  in Appendix 2.

What follows is a summary of what we have done until now. The present theorems show some formal features of how the complement of the totality and the totality behave in this mereological system. As we have already stated, we regard the complement of the totality in mereology as a formal implementation of Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, given his characterization of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as the absence of everything. We have also shown that the formal features of the complement of the totality match Heidegger's account of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Let's recapitulate why this is actually the case.

To begin with, recall that, according to Heidegger, we adopt the following characterization of objecthood and non-objecthood.

- (10) a.  $x$  is an object if and only if  $x$  is self-identical
- b.  $x$  is not an object if and only if  $x$  is not self-identical

Given this, (9) means that the complement of the totality (namely nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is not an object (because it is not self-identical) and, at the same time, it is an object (because it is self-identical). According to the late Heidegger, the truth of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (namely the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>) shows that both nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** have exactly these elusive features. As we have seen in chapter 1, the *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup> is *Dasein*<sup>\*</sup>'s realization that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not objects and objects. On the one hand, they are not objects because Heidegger endorses the ontological difference. According to the ontological difference, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object and, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, nothingness is not an object either. On the other hand, they are objects because everything we refer to is an object and we refer to nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Moreover, from the fact that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not objects, (7b), (7c) and (7d) follow; from the fact that nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are object, (8b), (8c) and (8d) follow.

First, consider the (7)s and, in particular, (7c). As we have seen, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** should have no parts, either existent or nonexistent. Since nothingness

and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not an object, how could they have some (existent or nonexistent) objects as its part at all? Indeed, as (7c) shows, no object is a part of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, since they are characterized as the absence of all objects. Neither the Eiffel tower nor Sherlock Holmes is a part of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are partly a result of removing them. (7d) and (7b) reflect the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** which immediately follow from this. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** do not have any part, then they do not have any common part with anything, including the totality, that is, (7d). Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** don't have any part, they are a null thing. Now, it is natural to think that, if we fuse a null thing, which has no part at all, to something, nothing will actually change as when we sum zero with any other number.

Now, consider the (8)s. They reflects the features of nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** which follows from the fact that they are objects. Even though Heidegger's nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are objects, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** have no object as their parts. Therefore, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are not parts of themselves ((8b)). Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are objects too, and every object has itself as its part, nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** have themselves as their parts ((8c)). From this, it immediately follows that nothingness and the totality has nothingness as their common part ((8d)), and thus they overlap with each other. Since nothingness and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are identical, the same hold for **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

## 4.5 Appendix 1: logic

The language is that of first order logic with identity and membership. The usual shorthand is used:  $A \vee B$  for  $\neg(\neg A \wedge \neg B)$ ;  $A \leftrightarrow B$  for  $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (B \rightarrow A)$ ;  $\exists$  is  $\neg\forall\neg$ .

**Axioms.** All instances of the following schemata are theorems:

$$\text{I } A \rightarrow A$$

$$\text{IIa } A \wedge B \rightarrow A$$

$$\text{IIb } A \wedge B \rightarrow B$$

$$\text{III } A \wedge (B \vee C) \rightarrow (A \wedge B) \vee (A \wedge C) \text{ [distribution]}$$

**IV**  $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (B \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow C)$  [*conjunctive syllogism*]

**V**  $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (A \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow B \wedge C)$

**VI**  $(A \rightarrow B) \leftrightarrow (\neg B \rightarrow \neg A)$  [*constraposition*]

**VII**  $A \leftrightarrow \neg\neg A$  [*double negation elimination*]

**VIII**  $A \vee \neg A$  [*excluded middle*]

**IX**  $(\forall x)A \rightarrow A(a \ / \ x)$

**X**  $(\forall x)(A \rightarrow B) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow (\forall x)B)$  [*with  $x$  to free in  $A$* ]

**XI**  $(\forall x)(A \vee B) \rightarrow A \vee (\forall x)B$  [*with  $x$  to free in  $A$* ]

[**VIII**] implies the law of non-contradiction,  $\neg(A \wedge \neg A)$ .

**Rules.** The following rules are validity preserving:

**I**  $A, B \vdash A \wedge B$  [*adjunction*]

**II**  $A, A \rightarrow B \vdash B$  [*modus ponens*]

**III**  $A \vdash (\forall x)A$  [*universal generalization*]

**IV**  $A \rightarrow B, C \rightarrow B \vdash (B \rightarrow C) \rightarrow (A \rightarrow B)$  [*hypothetical syllogism*]

**V**  $x = y \vdash A(x) \leftrightarrow A(y)$  [*substitution*]

## 4.6 Appendix 2: proofs of theorems

**proof of (7)** (7a) immediately follows from that  $\forall x(x = x)$  and  $\forall x(x = x \mapsto x \leq \text{lub}[x|x = x])$ .  $\square$

For (7b), take any  $x$ . Let us first consider the case where  $\exists y(y \not\leq x)$ .<sup>11</sup> In this case, from PM4, we have the complement of  $x$ ,  $\bar{x}$ . From (7a),  $\bar{x} \leq \text{lub}[x|x = x]$ . Since  $\forall x(x \leq y \mapsto \bar{y} \leq \bar{x})$  and  $\forall x(x = \bar{\bar{x}})$  (Weber and Contoir, 2015, p. 1282),  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} \leq x$  holds. Second consider the case where  $\neg\exists y(y \not\leq x)$ . This is equivalent to  $\forall y(y \leq x)$ ,

<sup>11</sup>Here we appeal to argument by cases, which is valid in DKQ. See Weber and Cotnoir (2015) p. 1289.

thus it immediately follows that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq x$ . In both cases,  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq x$  holds. Therefore we have (7c).  $\square$

(7c) is shown as follows. Take any  $x$ . Suppose that  $x \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Since  $\forall x(x \leq y \mapsto \bar{y} \leq \bar{x})$  and  $\forall x(x = \bar{x})$ ,  $lub[x|x=x] \leq \bar{x}$ . From (7a),  $\bar{x} \leq lub[x|x=x]$ . From PM2, we have  $\bar{x} = lub[x|x=x]$ . Let us call this (i). Again since  $\forall x(x = \bar{x})$ ,  $x = \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  holds. Call this (ii). From (i) and (7a),  $x \leq \bar{x}$ . From this and PM7, we have  $\forall z(z \bullet x \rightarrow z \bullet \bar{x})$ . Therefore  $x \bullet x \rightarrow x \bullet \bar{x}$ . Since  $\forall x(\neg x \bullet \bar{x})$  (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1281),  $\neg x \bullet x$ , that is,  $\forall y(y \not\leq x \vee y \not\leq \bar{x})$  (note that  $\rightarrow$  is contrapositive). Therefore we have  $x \not\leq x \vee x \not\leq \bar{x}$ , and thus  $x \not\leq x$ . From this and (ii), we have  $x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . Now  $x \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]} \vdash x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  holds. From this  $x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$  follows (Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p. 1289). Therefore  $\forall x(x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]})$ .  $\square$

(7d), that is,  $\forall x(x \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]} \vee x \not\leq lub[x|x=x])$ , immediately follows from (7c).  $\square$

**proof of (8)** (8a) immediately follows from (\*) which delivers  $\exists x(x \not\leq lub[x|x=x])$ .  $\square$

For (8b). From (7c), it follows that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \not\leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ . This entails that  $\exists x(\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \not\leq x)$  which is equivalent to (8b).  $\square$

For (8c). PM1 entails that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ , and thus  $\exists x(x \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]})$ , which is equivalent to (8c).  $\square$

(8d), that is,  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \bullet lub[x|x=x]$ . follows from (7a) and that  $\overline{lub[x|x=x]} \leq \overline{lub[x|x=x]}$ .  $\square$

**proof of (9)** (9a) immediately follows from PM1 and PM2.  $\square$

(9b) immediately follows from (7c) and PM2.  $\square$

## 4.7 Appendix 3: Nontriviality of $PM+(\ast)$

Someone could worry that  $PM+(\ast)$ , exactly in virtue of the fact that they are contradictory, fall into logical triviality. In this Appendix, we will present a model which shows that this is not the case. To show that  $PM+(\ast)$  is not trivial, we adopt the same strategy as in the proof of non-triviality of PM presented in Appendix 2 of Weber and Cotnoir (2015). In particular, our proofs use the fact that DKQ is sound with respect to the

standard three valued semantics of the paraconsistent logic RM3. The set of values of RM3 is  $\{t, f, b\}$ :  $t$  is true,  $f$  is false and  $b$  is both true and false.  $t$  and  $b$  are its designated values. The truth functions for connectives are defined as follows.

	$\neg$	$\wedge$	t	b	f	$\vee$	t	b	f	$\rightarrow$	t	b	f
t	$f$	t	$t$	$b$	$f$	t	$t$	$t$	$t$	t	$t$	$f$	$f$
b	$b$	b	$b$	$b$	$f$	b	$t$	$b$	$b$	b	$t$	$b$	$f$
f	$t$	f	$f$	$f$	$f$	f	$t$	$b$	$f$	f	$t$	$t$	$t$

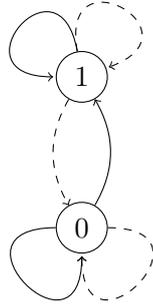
Given the fact and semantics of RM3, to prove non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$ , it is enough to show that all the axioms of  $PM+(\ast)$  take either the value  $t$  or the value  $b$  in some RM3 interpretations for them, and that  $PM+(\ast)$  have at least one formula which takes the value  $f$  there.

Before showing the non-triviality of our theory, let us make a general remark on the treatment of quantifiers: If the domain is finite, universal quantifiers can be treated as conjunctions and particular quantifiers will be treated as disjunctions (see Weber and Cotnoir, 2015, p.1291). In particular, in cases where the domain consists of 1 and 0 (as is in our models defined below),  $\exists x(\phi x)$  takes the same value as  $\phi(1) \vee \phi(0)$ ; and  $\forall x(\phi x)$  takes the same value as  $\phi(1) \wedge \phi(0)$ . Given the truth function for  $\vee$ , to prove that  $\exists x(\phi x)$  is designated, it is enough to show that either  $\phi(1)$  or  $\phi(0)$  is designated. In the same way, to prove that  $\forall x(\phi)$  is designated, it is enough to show that both  $\phi(1)$  and  $\phi(0)$  are designated.

Let's start discussing the non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$ . To show this, we use exactly the same model as one in the proof of non-triviality for PM given by Weber and Cotnoir (2015) in Appendix 2. Let's call this model  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$ .  $M_{PM+(\ast)} = \langle D, V \rangle$  is defined as follows: the domain of interpretation  $D$  is  $\{0, 1\}$ .  $V(\leq)$  and  $V(=)$  are as described in table (b) and table (c).

The truth table (b) describes the behavior of parthood. For instance,  $V(1 \leq 1) = V(0 \leq 0) = b$ ,<sup>12</sup> which means that 1 is part of itself and 1 is not part of itself, and 0 is part of itself and 0 is not part of itself;  $V(1 \leq 0) = f$ , which means that 1 is not part of 0. The truth table (c) describes the behavior of identity. For instance,  $V(0 = 1) = V(1 = 0) = f$ , which means that 0 and 1 are not identical. The graph (a) represents  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$  visually: 0 and 1 are the elements of the model, the solid arrow indicates what is part of what:

<sup>12</sup>For simplicity, we use '0' and '1' as terms in the theory for 0 and 1 respectively.



(a)

$\leq$	0	1
0	$b$	$t$
1	$f$	$b$

(b)

$=$	0	1
0	$b$	$f$
1	$f$	$b$

(c)

$x \rightarrow y$  means  $x$  is part of  $y$ . The dashed arrow indicates what is not part of what:  $x \dashrightarrow y$  means  $x$  is not part of  $y$ . For instance, looking at the graph, it is easy to see that, in  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$ , 0 is part of itself (represented by a solid arrow from 0 to 0) and 0 is not part of itself (represented by a dashed arrow from 0 to 0).

Let's now show the non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$  using  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$ . Recall that the axiomatic system proposed by Weber and Cotnoir, namely  $PM$ , has exactly the same axioms of  $PM+(\ast)$  with the exception of  $(\ast)$ . Since Weber and Cotnoir have already shown that all axioms of  $PM$  are designated in their model and since their model is the same one used here, in order to show the non-triviality of  $PM+(\ast)$ , it is enough to check that  $(\ast)$ , which is repeated below, is designated.

$$(\ast) \exists x \exists y (x \not\leq y \wedge lub(y, z = z))$$

Now, the proof goes as follows. Since the domain is the finite set  $\{0, 1\}$ ,  $(\ast)$  takes the same value as the disjunction  $(1 \not\leq 1 \wedge lub(1, z = z)) \vee (1 \not\leq 0 \wedge lub(0, z = z)) \vee (0 \not\leq 1 \wedge lub(1, z = z)) \vee (0 \not\leq 0 \wedge lub(0, z = z))$ . Given the truth function for  $\vee$ , if one of these disjuncts is designated, then the whole disjunction, and thus  $(\ast)$ , is designated. Here we show that the first disjunct,  $1 \not\leq 1 \wedge lub(1, z = z)$  takes the value  $b$ . The first conjunct of this takes  $b$  (this is obvious from the model). The second conjunct,  $lub(1, z = z)$ , takes value  $b$ , which is shown as follows. Given the definition of  $lub$ ,  $lub(1, z = z)$  is rephrased as  $\forall y (y = y \mapsto y \leq 1) \wedge \forall z (\forall y (y = y \mapsto y \leq z) \mapsto 1 \leq z)$ . Let's start considering  $\forall y (y = y \mapsto y \leq 1)$ . Since the enthymematic conditional is defined as  $A \mapsto B =_{df} A \wedge t \rightarrow B$ ,

$\forall y(y = y \mapsto y \leq 1)$  is rephrased as  $\forall y(y = y \wedge t \rightarrow y \leq 1)$ . Now, we consider all the possible values of  $y$  as follows:

- $V(1 = 1 \wedge t \rightarrow 1 \leq 1) = b$
- $V(0 = 0 \wedge t \rightarrow 0 \leq 1) = t$

Since universal quantifier is treated as conjunction, this means that

$$V(\forall y(y = y \wedge t \rightarrow y \leq 1)) = b \quad (4.1)$$

Let's continue by examining  $\forall y(\forall z(z = z \mapsto z \leq y) \mapsto 1 \leq y)$ . This is rephrased as  $\forall y(((\forall z(z = z \wedge t) \rightarrow z \leq y) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq y)$ . (4.2) considers all the possible values of  $z$  with  $y$  having value 1, and (4.3) considers all the possible values of  $z$  with  $y$  having value 0.

$$V((((1 = 1 \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 1) \wedge ((0 = 0 \wedge t) \rightarrow 0 \leq 1) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 1) = b \quad (4.2)$$

$$V((((1 = 1 \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 0) \wedge ((0 = 0 \wedge t) \rightarrow 0 \leq 0) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq 0) = t \quad (4.3)$$

Since universal quantifier is treated as conjunction, this means that

$$V(\forall y(((\forall z(z = z \wedge t) \rightarrow z \leq y) \wedge t) \rightarrow 1 \leq y)) = b \quad (4.4)$$

(4.1) and (4.4) show that  $\text{lub}(1, z = z)$  takes value  $b$ . Since  $1 \leq 1$  takes value  $b$ ,  $1 \leq 1 \wedge \text{lub}(1, z = z)$  takes value  $b$ . Therefore,  $(\ast)$  is designated.

The last step to show that  $PM+(\ast)$  is not trivial consists in showing that there is at least one formula which takes value  $f$ , which is already done by Weber and Cotnoir (2015). However, it is worthwhile here to add one example of invalid formula in  $PM+(\ast)$ , that is  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$ . Indeed,  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$  takes  $f$  and thus it is not a theorem of  $PM+(\ast)$ . It is easy to see this. First,  $\text{lub}(1, x \neq x)$ ,  $\text{lub}(1, x = x)$ ,  $\text{lub}(0, x \Downarrow 1)$  are designated and, thus,  $\text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$  is 1 and  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]}$  is 0. Moreover,  $0 = 1$  takes  $f$ . Therefore,  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x = x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$  takes value  $f$ .

**One last quick remark.** From this non-triviality proof, it is easy to see that  $PM+(\ast)$  does not accommodate Priest's intuition according to which nothingness is the mereological sum of what is not self-identical. Indeed, as we have shown, in  $PM+(\ast)$ , it is not

the case that the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals is identical to the complement of the least upper bound of the self-identicals (that is, in our model, nothingness). However,  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  can include Priest's idea with the addition of a new axiom. This axiom, call it  $(\ast\ast)$ , is the following one:  $\overline{\text{lub}[x|x=x]} = \text{lub}[x|x \neq x]$ . We call  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$  with the addition of  $(\ast\ast)$ ,  $\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)$ . As in the case of  $\text{PM}+(\ast)$ , it is possible to show the non triviality of  $\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)$ . In what follows, we will simply sketch the model according to which  $\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)$  is not trivial. Call this model  $M_{\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)}$ .  $M_{\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)} = \langle D, V \rangle$  is defined as follows: the domain of interpretation  $D$  is  $\{0, 1\}$ .  $V(\leq)$  and  $V(=)$  are as described in table (b) and table (c).

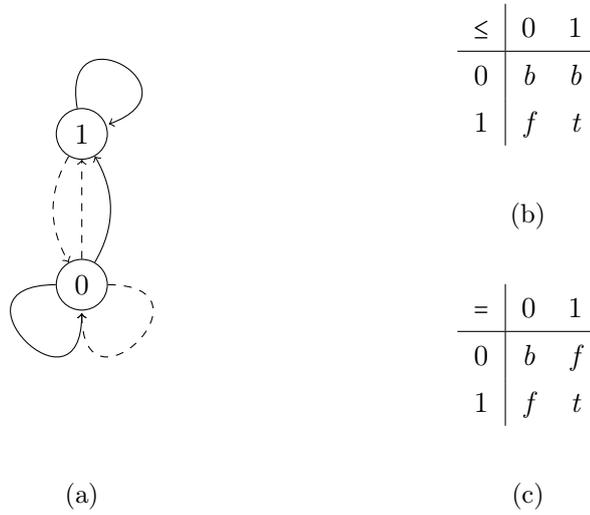


Figure 4.2

The truth table (b) describes the behavior of parthood: for instance,  $V(0 \leq 0) = b$ , which means that 0 is part of itself and 0 is not part of itself.  $V(1 \leq 0) = f$ , which means that 1 is not part of 0. The truth table (c) describes the behavior of identity: for instance,  $V(0 = 1) = V(1 = 0) = f$ , which means that 0 is not identical to 1 and 1 is not identical to 0. The graph (a) represents  $M_{\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)}$  visually: as in the graph used for  $M_{\text{PM}+(\ast)}$ , 0 and 1 are the elements of the model, the solid arrow indicates what is part of what:  $x \rightarrow y$  means  $x$  is part of  $y$ . The dashed arrow indicates what is not part of what:  $x \dashrightarrow y$  means  $x$  is not part of  $y$ . For instance, looking at the graph, it is easy to see that, in  $M_{\text{PM}+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)}$ , 0 is part of 1 (represented by a solid arrow from 0 to 1) and, at the same time, 0 is not part of 1 (represented by a dashed arrow from 0 to 1).

Now, due to the large amount of calculations, we will not go through all the necessary steps: calculations are left to the readers. However, given  $M_{PM+(\ast)+(\ast\ast)}$ , all the axioms of  $M_{PM+(\ast)}$  hold. Moreover,  $(\ast\ast)$  holds as well because the least upper bound of the self-identicals takes value 1 and the least upper bound of the non-self-identicals takes value 0. Since the complement of the least upper bound of the self-identical takes value 0 as well, this means that the least upper bound of the non-self-identical (Priest's nothingness) and the complement of the least upper bound of the self-identicals (Heidegger's nothingness) are identical. In this sense, Priest's intuition can be incorporated in the mereological system presented in this chapter.



## Chapter 5

# *Grundsein*

**Overview.** As we have already discussed in the first chapter, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Moreover, all entities are in virtue of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities because it makes all entities entities. In this fourth and final chapter, we try to develop a grounding theory that explains how **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** can ground everything that is. Since, according to Heidegger's *Ereignis*<sup>\*</sup>, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** has inconsistent features (because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity), the grounding theory presented here has inconsistent features as well.

**Structure.** In **Section 4.1**, we introduce Heidegger's concept of ground and we focus our attention on the *ontological* ground, as it is understood before the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>. In **Section 4.2**, we present Heidegger's idea according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of every entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is itself ungrounded. We also discuss its relation with the Principle of Sufficient Reasons (PSR), and we describe its structural properties. Finally, we show that these structural properties are the same ones that characterize a particularly strong form of *foundationalism*. In **Section 4.3** and **Section 4.4**, we consider *ontological* ground as it is understood after the *Kehre*<sup>\*</sup>. We show how Heidegger's foundationalism should be revised in order to do justice to the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. Thus, we introduce two forms of para-foundationalism, which is an inconsistent version of foundationalism. In **Section 4.5**, using para-foundationalism, we try to give an interpretation of one of the most obscure concepts of the so-called late Heidegger, namely the *last God*. Finally, in **Section 4.6**, we propose two formal models that show how, working in a paraconsistent setting, para-foundationalism does not lead to logical triviality.

## 5.1 Being<sub>MET</sub>: the ontological ground

During the last months of 1928, while Heidegger was writing his well known lecture entitled *What is metaphysics?*, another manuscript was sitting on his desk. Its title was *On the essence of Ground*. Heidegger was aware that, even though the notion of ground was “bound up with [so many] central questions of metaphysics” (Heidegger, 1998, p.81), its meaning [*Sinn*\*] was never properly understood. So, this second essay was meant to answer the following question: what does ground [*Grund*\*] mean?

Heidegger proposes two complementary characterizations of the notion of ground. On the one hand, appealing to Aristotle, he takes it to be “the first” thing or the “beginning” on which what is grounded *depends*: these expressions seem to suggest that there is a hierarchical structure of elements in which the primary ones behave as basis for the secondary ones. In this sense, the ground is the “cause” which metaphysically and logically determines what is grounded in it (cf. Bliss and Priest, forthcoming; cf. Corkum, 2013). On the other hand, appealing to Leibniz, Heidegger takes ground to be the “reason” for something to be how and what it is: something obtains *because of* its ground or something holds *in virtue of* its ground.

According to Heidegger, grounding is not unitary; there is no single dependence relation in play. Indeed, he discusses three examples of different kinds of grounding: the first two types of ground are concerned with the reason why some entities are the entities that they are (for instance, in Heidegger’s jargon, why some entities are pieces of *equipment*) while the last one is concerned with the reason why all entities simply *are*. In other terms, the first two types are about the *ontic* ground (a ground which exclusively deals with specific kinds of entities) while the last one is about the *ontological* ground (a ground which deals only with entities as entities). Since, in what follows, we will focus on the latter kind of ground, let’s describe it in more detail.

The ontological ground, namely what Heidegger labels as the *ground of something*, is “the primary” one (Heidegger, 1967, p.125) because it is not concerned with one specific kind of entity but with entities in general. According to Heidegger, everything we can refer to (everything we can think about, speak about or reason about) is an entity. “Such grounding of things lies ‘at the ground’ of all comportment toward beings, and in such a way that (...) beings become manifest in themselves (as the beings they are)” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125). “[Such grounding] makes possible the manifestation of beings in

themselves” (Heidegger, 1967, p.124). Exactly the entities manifested in themselves are grounded in the ontological ground - namely entities simply as entities, as things that *are*. For instance, since we can think about a hammer, a number, the redness of the rose, the idea of the infinite, and even God, they are all entities and, as such, they are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or, according to the second Heidegger, in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), which makes them be. According to Heidegger, the ontological ground is exactly the **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) of all entities that are. It also follows that, “grounding something means making possible the *why-question* in general. (...) Why is this in this way and not otherwise? Why this and not that? *Why something at all and not nothing?*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125). We can ask why a number (which is an entity) has this property or that property, only because there is a number (an entity) in the first place, and there is a number (an entity) in the first place if and only if the ontological ground makes that number an entity. We can worry why there is something (the hammer, the redness of the rose, the idea of the infinite) and not nothing, exactly because there is something and not nothing at all. However, there is something if and only if something is grounded in a ground which makes that something something. In other words, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is ‘the reason’ why any entity is an entity. In order to ask something about entities, entities are needed. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is needed as well because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) makes entities entities. Since the ontological ground is the ground *in virtue of* which entities are entities and since, according to Heidegger, what makes entities entities is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), then the ground *in virtue of* which entities are entities is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) itself. Entities are *because of* **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) grounds entities. The ground, understood as the ontological ground, is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) itself.

As Heidegger points out, this kind of ground is metaphysically more fundamental than all the others. Indeed, the ontic grounds are the reason why a specific kind of entity (namely a piece of equipment) is that specific kind of entity, while the ontological ground is the reason for any entity to simply be an entity. It is the reason why everything *is*. For instance, according to Heidegger’s phenomenology, a piece of equipment is grounded in the fact that it can be used to pursue specific tasks or to plan future activities; however, in order to be something that can be used to engage in present or future activities, it needs to be an entity. More generally, it needs *to be*. It needs to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Being<sub>MET</sub>**). The ground, understood as the ontological ground, is more

radical than all the other kinds of ground because it is metaphysically prior: it is the *conditio sine qua non* for anything else. According to the ontology presented in *Being and Time* (1927), any piece of equipment, in order to be a piece of equipment, is grounded in the possibility of being used by *Dasein*\* (by a human being); however, in order to be grounded in the possibility of being used, it has to be an entity and, in order to be an entity, it has to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). The fact that, for example, a hammer is a piece of equipment is primarily grounded in the fact that a hammer is an entity. Without being grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), a hammer, as any other piece of equipment, cannot be that specific entity, which is a piece of equipment. In this sense, any *ontic truth* (namely, any truth concerning entities) is primarily grounded in an *ontological truth* (namely, a truth concerning what makes any entity an entity). Heidegger: “Yet because such grounding of something prevails from the outset throughout all becoming-manifest of beings [ontic truth], all ontic discovery and disclosing must in its way be a *grounding of something* [ontological truth]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125).

In the secondary literature, Heidegger’s discussion about the ontological ground is often interpreted as the mystical element of his philosophy. The ontological ground, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), is not something we can logically think about or rationally discuss – it has to be perceived, experienced without turning it into the subject matter of philosophy. As Caputo claims, “Heidegger’s grounding is without a why; it is the renunciation of concepts and representations, of propositions and ratiocinations about Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**]” (Caputo, 1986, p191). In what follows, we give an alternative interpretation revealing the philosophical argument that can rationally do justice to Heidegger’s understudying of the ontological ground. In **Section 4.2**, we discuss Heidegger’s account of grounding before the *Kehre*\* and, thus, as we have already explained in chapter 1, we are concerned with **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. From **Section 4.3** to the end of the present chapter, we discuss how Heidegger should revise his grounding theory according to the dialethic solution to the problem of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** presented in chapter 1. Thus, we are concerned with **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

## 5.2 **Being<sub>MET</sub>**: foundationalism

As we have already discussed above, the ontological ground constitutes the relation between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and all entities. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** determines entities as enti-

ties, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** ontologically grounds all entities. If something is not grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, it is not an entity. More explicitly, this metaphysical dependence relation between **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and all entities can be spelled out in the following way:

*(Gr)*:  $x$  grounds  $y$  if and only if  $x$  makes  $y$  an entity.

However, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is what makes all entities entities and since nothing else makes all entities entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the only ground for all entities as such. The foundational element that makes all entities entities (namely being itself) is unique. Therefore, *(Gr)* can be reformulated as:

*(Gr')*:  $b$  grounds  $y$  if and only if  $b$  makes  $y$  an entity.

where  $b$  is **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and  $y$  can be any entity. Nevertheless, as we have already discussed, Heidegger not only holds the belief that any entity is an entity *in virtue of Being<sub>MET</sub>*, he also thinks that, according to the so-called *ontological difference* [*ontologische Differenz*], **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself is not an entity. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and, exactly because of this, Heidegger claims that the ground, understood as the ontological ground, is transcendental. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground on which all entities are grounded. Because of the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is transcendental in the sense that it is beyond entities – beyond the world (namely the totality of entities). So, if **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ground of all entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is transcendental, the ground of all entities is transcendental. Heidegger: “Ground belongs to the essence of being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] and being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] (not beings!) is given only in transcendence” (Heidegger, 1967, p.128). Thus, “such grounding prevails transcendently from the outset throughout all becoming-manifest of beings” (Heidegger, 1967, p.125).

From these observations, two important consequences follow. First of all, given *(Gr')* and the ontological difference, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded. If every entity, in order to be an entity, needs to be grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, then **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is neither grounded in something other than **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself nor is it self-grounded; otherwise it would be an entity. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is simply un-

grounded.<sup>1</sup> In Heidegger's jargon, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the "abyssal ground" (Heidegger, 1967, p.130). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the "abyss of the ground" (Heidegger, 1967, p.130) because, since *being grounded* means *being an entity*, and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded. Nevertheless, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds everything else. In a footnote of *On the essence of ground*, this idea is clearly stated: "Where does the necessity lie for grounding? In the *abyss of*, in the *non-ground*" (Heidegger, 1967, p.83). **Being<sub>MET</sub>** lies on the abyss because it is the non-ground: it does not have a foundation. Metaphorically, there is no thing (no ground) that supports (grounds) **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. In other words: "Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is intrinsically ground-like, what gives ground, presences as the ground, has the character of ground. [However,] the ground-like is groundless; what grounds does not need any ground" (Heidegger, 1936, p. 170). Because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an object, "being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] is the rejection of the rule of such grounding; it renounces all grounding. It is abyssal (ab-grounding)" (Heidegger, 1985, p. 170).

The second consequence is that the so-called Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) does not unrestrictedly hold. Heidegger takes (PSR) to be that "fundamental principle [*Grundsatz*]" according to which "nothing is without reason (*nihil est sine ratione*)" (Heidegger, 1967, p.83) or, transcribing it positively, "every entity has a reason (*omne ens habet rationem*)" (Heidegger, 1967, p.83). Moreover, Heidegger thinks that *having a reason* means *being in virtue of something*, *being because of something* or, more generally, *being grounded in something*. From this point of view, the fundamental principle [*Grundsatz*] is a principle about what is fundamental [*Der Satz von Grund*]. "The fundamental principle is a principle about the ground [*Der Satz von Grund ist ein Grundsatz*]" (Heidegger, 1967, p.83). If this is the case, (PSR) can be also read as "nothing is without a ground" or "everything is with a ground". Now, having said so, it is easy to see why Heidegger's metaphysics leads to a constrained version of (PSR). Indeed, since every entity

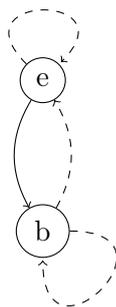
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<sup>1</sup>Following McDaniel (2015) and Priest (2015), someone may object that, in Heidegger, it is not the case that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** always depends on entities. As Heidegger himself writes: "if we think of the matter just a bit more rigorously, (...) we see that Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] means always and everywhere: *the Being [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] of beings*" (Heidegger, 1957a, p.61). However, the kind of dependence or grounding relation in place here cannot be the dependence or grounding relation discussed in this chapter. Indeed, (*Gr*) is only that kind of (ontological) dependence or grounding relation that makes all entities entities. Since, from the beginning to the end of his philosophical trajectory, Heidegger always endorsed the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is *not* an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be grounded (in the sense of (*Gr*)) in entities. If it is the case that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** depends on entities, such dependence relation is not a (*Gr*) one.

is grounded in **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, every entity has a reason to be something (and not nothing). However, since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not an entity, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is ungrounded. This means that it is not true that everything has a reason (understood as ground) and, consequently, it is not the case that (PSR) holds unrestrictedly. Indeed, according to Heidegger himself, every entity has a reason but not **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is ungrounded, “the principle of [sufficient] reason (or ground) is valid for *beings* [entities]” (Heidegger, 1967, p.128). (PSR) holds for entities but not for **Being**<sub>MET</sub>. Everything is grounded in **Being**<sub>MET</sub> (which is why every entity has a reason to be) but **Being**<sub>MET</sub> remains the ‘groundless ground’ of everything that is (cf. Braver, 2013).

Even though, given the contemporary analytic debate, the position described until now may seem weird and obscure, it could be easily categorized as a kind of foundationalism. Following Bliss and Priest (forthcoming), we take foundationalism to be the view according to which everything grounds out in *foundational elements*. An element is a foundational one (let’s call it *FE* $x$ ) if there is no  $y$  on which  $x$  depends, other than perhaps itself. Such an elements can be formally described in the following way:  $\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset x = y)$ . We read  $x \rightarrow y$  as  $x$  depends on  $y$  (and not as a connective, as we did in Chapter 3!). Since **Being**<sub>MET</sub> behaves as a *foundational element* because there is no element on which **Being**<sub>MET</sub> depends, Heidegger’s metaphysics is a foundationalist one. However, Heidegger also endorses a particularly strong form of foundationalism in which there is only one *foundational element*, which is **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, and everything depends upon this unique *fundamentalium*. Taking  $b$  as **Being**<sub>MET</sub>, we can formally express this thought in the following way:  $\exists b(FEb \wedge \forall y(y \neq b \supset y \rightarrow b))$ . On the one hand, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is unique because there is only one **Being**<sub>MET</sub> which grounds all entities. On the other hand, **Being**<sub>MET</sub> is not grounded in anything else and is not self-grounded either; otherwise it would be an entity.

It is also possible to precisely describe Heidegger’s foundationalism appealing to its structural properties. For simplicity, let’s consider the following graph, which describes the grounding relation between **Being**<sub>MET</sub> (represented by the node labeled  $b$ ) and one entity only (represented by the node labeled  $e$ ). The solid arrows indicate what depends on what, while the dashed arrows indicate where there is no dependence relation.



As we can see from the graph, entity  $e$  depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but it does not depend on itself. Moreover, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$  and it does not depend on itself either. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything at all. From this simplified picture, the structural properties of Heidegger's foundationalism should be clear.<sup>2</sup> First of all, Heidegger's foundationalism endorses *anti-reflexivity* or **[AR]**, according to which nothing depends on itself. Formally, this structural property is expressed in the following way:

**[AR]**:  $\forall x \neg x \rightarrow x$ .

Since neither entity  $e$  nor **Being<sub>MET</sub>** depend on themselves, nothing depends on itself. More generally, since every entity depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and only on **Being<sub>MET</sub>**!), and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything (not even on itself), nothing depends on itself. Secondly, it endorses *anti-symmetry* or **[AS]**, according to which no things depend on each other. Formally, it is expressed as:

**[AS]**:  $\forall x \forall y (x \rightarrow y \supset \neg y \rightarrow x)$ .

Once again, consider the graph. Entity  $e$  depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$ . Since there are only two elements and since neither of them depend on each other, nothing depends on each other. Of course, **[AS]** does not rule out the possibility that something depends on itself because, as the formula shows,  $x$  could be  $y$ . Nevertheless, according to the graph presented above, this is not the case. Since

<sup>2</sup>The structural properties discussed and used in this chapter are introduced by Bliss and Priest in their *Metaphysical Dependence, East and West* (forthcoming).

[AR] holds, no things depend on each other, not even on themselves. More generally, let's recall that, in Heidegger's metaphysics, we deal with entities and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** only. Entities depend on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** in order to be entities, but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entities. Moreover, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything, it does not depend on itself either. Thus, no things depend on each other. Finally, Heidegger's foundationalism endorses the negation of *extendability* or [-E], according to which something does not depend on anything. Formally,

[-E]:  $\exists x \forall y (x \rightarrow y \supset x = y)$ .

As we can easily see looking at the graph, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$  and it does not depend on itself either. Thus, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything. According to Heidegger, there is an element that does not depend on anything; this element is **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. It does not depend on anything because, since everything that depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not even depend on itself. Once again, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ungrounded ground or the groundless ground. Using a poetic expression borrowed from Angelus Silesius' *Cherubinic Wanderer*, Heidegger claims that: "The rose is without a *wherefor* [*warum*] - it blooms because it blooms" (Angelus Silesius, 1989, p.23). Asking for the ultimate reason of the rose is useless because there is no ultimate reason for its blooming. Of course, the rose has some reasons to be what the rose actually is; however, the rose, as all the other entities, is without an ultimate reason. Its reason, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, does not have any reason. Since all entities are in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not in virtue of anything, all entities are not in virtue of anything either. This does not mean that entities do not have any ground *at all*. It simply means that all entities rest on a ground which is ungrounded. The ground on which every entity relies is, indeed, an abyss. The rose, as with all the rest, is ultimately groundless.

### 5.3 Beyng<sub>MET</sub>: para-foundationalism 1.0

At this point, the problem discussed in chapter 1 emerges again. The issue in question does not directly concern the foundationalist thesis according to which the rose, with all the other entities, is grounded in an ungrounded *fundamentalium*; on the contrary, it is

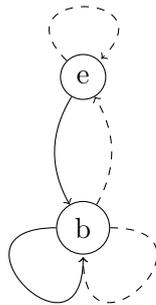
about the *fundamentalium* itself. The problem concerns **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and it is easy to see why.

As we know, Heidegger's metaphysics works under two main assumptions. First of all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity. Secondly, an entity is whatever we can refer to. It follows that it should be impossible to refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>**; otherwise **Being<sub>MET</sub>** would be an entity. Nevertheless, we did refer to **Being<sub>MET</sub>** describing it as *such and such*. For instance, we have argued in favor of the idea that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ungrounded ground of every entity. However, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity at all, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** cannot be the ungrounded ground either. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** can be neither thought nor spoken. The price paid for doing so is that, referring to it, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** itself would be turned into exactly what **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not, namely an entity. Therefore, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ineffable: whatever is the grounding structure which has **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as a *foundational element*, nothing can be said about it. **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, the ground, cannot be discussed, argued for or discovered. "The essence of ground cannot even be sought [or] let alone found" (Heidegger, 1967, p.127).

The situation is even more complicated than this, though. Indeed, not only do the two assumptions endorsed by Heidegger lead to the ineffability of the ground, but they also lead to an aporia. This is actually the case because, exactly in saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ineffable, we say something about it. In other terms, exactly in saying that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity because we refer to it. Heidegger's assumptions imply that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity – a contradiction. According to the interpretation presented in chapter 1, the late Heidegger (namely the Heidegger after the *Kehre*\*) accepts such a contradiction endorsing the position according to which **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. As we have already explained, in order to distinguish between the consistent and the inconsistent account of the fundamental element, Heidegger calls the latter one '**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**'. More specifically, Heidegger's *Ereignis*\* (the Event) is exactly the realization that the "[**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is affected by the lack of beyng [**Being<sub>MET</sub>**] but, nevertheless, *is*" (Heidegger, 1989a, p.121). This is also the reason why the late Heidegger claims that "the contradiction is essentially a fundamental proposition about beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] and its truth" (Heidegger, 1998b, p.13). At this point a question becomes relevant: how does the position of Heidegger after the *Kehre*\* affect his account of grounding?

It is natural to think that the switch from a consistent account of the *foundational*

*element* (call it **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) to an inconsistent account of the *foundational element* (call it **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) would imply a switch from a consistent account of grounding to an inconsistent account of grounding. And this is what happens. Let's recall that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity. As we have already seen, from the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, it follows that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is ungrounded. From the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity, it follows that, in virtue of its *being an entity*, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** needs to be grounded. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the ontological ground that makes every entity an entity, then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds itself. Thus, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and, at the same time, it does not depend on anything. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded and ungrounded at the same time. This is shown in the following graph:



Once again, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is represented by the node labeled *e* and the entity grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is represented by the node labeled *b*. The solid arrows indicate what depends on what, while the dashed arrows indicate where there is no dependence relation. As we can see, entity *e* depends on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and it does not depend on itself. Moreover, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity *e* but it both depends and not on itself.

Now, let's have a look at the structural properties that this new inconsistent grounding structure has. From the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity, everything previously stated still holds. Since all entities depend on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything (not even on itself), nothing depends on itself. Therefore, [AR] holds. Since all entities depend on **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (and only on **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** neither depends on all entities nor depends on itself, no things depend mutually on each other. Therefore, [AS] holds. Finally, from the fact that all entities depend on

**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** but **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything else, it follows that something does not depend on anything else. Therefore, **[¬E]** holds. However, in contrast with the dependence relation grounded in the consistent *foundational element* (**Being<sub>MET</sub>**), this new approach has more structural properties than the ones described until now. Indeed, given the fact that **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity as well, two other structural properties hold. First of all, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is (also) an entity and since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the only *foundational element* that makes all entities entities, something depends on itself, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** makes itself an entity. The structural property according to which something depends on itself is the negation of the *anti-reflexivity* property (**[¬AR]**) and it is formalized in the following way:

$$\mathbf{[¬AR]}: \exists x x \rightarrow x$$

Secondly, since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is (also) an entity and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is the only *foundational element* which makes all entities entities, the negation of **[AS]** holds as well. We formally describe this as:

$$\mathbf{[¬AS]}: \exists x \exists y (x \rightarrow y \wedge y \rightarrow x).$$

Strictly speaking, **[¬AS]** says that some things depend on each other, without ruling out the possibility that some things depend on themselves. Now, **[¬AS]** would be incompatible with the fact that there are things depending on themselves if and only if **[AR]** holds. However, this is not the case with Heidegger because, as we have seen, according to him, both **[AR]** and **[¬AR]** hold. Therefore, **[¬AS]** holds because **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does depend on itself: it is self-grounded. At this point, it is easy to see why the inconsistency of the *foundational element* **Being<sub>MET</sub>** spreads to the structure of the grounding dependence. Since **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, the grounding dependence relation has an inconsistent characterization as well: both **[AR]** and **[¬AR]**, and **[AS]** and **[¬AS]** hold.

On the one hand, **Being<sub>MET</sub>**'s theory of grounding remains a foundationalist one, as in the case of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**. Since we follow Bliss and Priest (forthcoming) in defining foundationalism as the theory which includes *foundational elements* (*FEx*) and since

**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** behaves as a *foundational element*, this new account of grounding can be seen as a particularly extreme version of foundationalism. On the other hand, such a foundationalist approach is inconsistent because it has inconsistent structural properties: it endorses **[AR]** and its negation **[¬AR]**, and **[AS]** and its negation **[¬AS]**. We call this inconsistent form of foundationalism, *para-foundationalism*.

## 5.4 Beyng<sub>MET</sub>: para-foundationalist 2.0

Heidegger's foundationalist approach is very different from the para-foundationalist one: as we have seen, the former is a consistent theory and it uses a consistent *foundational element* (**Being<sub>MET</sub>**) while the latter is an inconsistent theory and it uses an inconsistent *foundational element* (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**). However, these two grounding theories have something in common. Both of them take the *foundational element* (**Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) to be what determines entities as entities. Nevertheless, as we have already seen in both chapter 1 and chapter 2, in the very late period of Heidegger's philosophy, he starts to characterize the *foundational element* in a slightly different way, equating **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** with *being self-identical*. Let's recall that, in his *Identity and difference* (1957a), Heidegger claims that all entities are entities in virtue of the fact that "each entity is itself" (Heidegger, 1957a, p.28). Now, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (interpreted as *being self-identical*) still determines entities as entities because all entities are entities *in virtue of* the fact that they are exactly what they are. Any entity is that specific and unique entity that is: the reason for an entity to be an entity is its *being identical to itself*. However, if we work with this new understanding of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, we have a new (and more extreme) form of para-foundationalism. Let's see why.

First of all, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** determines all entities as entities, and if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is *being self-identical*, since all entities are entities, all entities are self-identical. Secondly, according to the inconsistent account of the *foundational element*, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and not an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical and not. Moreover, because in Heidegger's metaphysics, everything is an entity *only*, with the exception of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (which is an entity and not), everything is self-identical *only* with the exception of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (which is self-identical and not). Now, given this framework, all the structural properties previously attributed to para-foundationalism hold. **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds all entities and, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is not an entity, it is ungrounded.

From here, **[AR]** holds. **[AS]** holds as well because, if all entities depend on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on any entity (not even on itself), no elements depend on each other. However, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and, thus, both **[¬AR]** and **[¬AS]** hold too. Finally, **[¬E]** holds because, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and it is ungrounded, something (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) does not depend on anything else. In other words, the negation of *Extendability* holds because, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded, it is not the case that everything depends on anything else. Indeed, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself does not.

Until here, everything is exactly the same as in the para-foundationalist case previously described. However, if we look carefully at the definition of **[E]**, we will see that, when **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood as a synonym of *being self-identical*, this structural property holds as well. So, consider **[E]**, which is defined in the following way:

**[E]**:  $\forall x \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$ .

Now, this structural property says that everything depends on something else. It is important to underline that, according to **[E]**, all entities depend on something which is not themselves (and this is guaranteed by the first conjunct of the formula, that is  $y \neq x$ ). Exactly for this reason, in both foundationalism and para-foundationalism, the negation of **[E]** holds. According to foundationalism, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is simply ungrounded and this means that it is not the case that everything depends on something else. Indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** does not. According to para-foundationalism, the negation of **[E]** holds because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both ungrounded and self-grounded. This means that it is still not the case that everything depends on something else. In other words, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything else (in virtue of its *being ungrounded*) and it depends on itself (in virtue of its *being self-grounded*). In both cases, the negation of **[E]** holds because there is something that does not depend on anything else, namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. However, the situation changes if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or what determines entities as entities) is interpreted as *being self-identical*. In this case, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is self-identical (because it is an entity) and not-self-identical (because it is not an entity). Now, on the one hand, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical, the negation of **[E]** holds; even though **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself, it is not true that everything depends on something else. On the other hand, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not self-identical as well, **[E]** holds. From the fact **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not

self-identical, it follows that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds something other than itself. In other words, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is self-identical (as in the case of Heidegger's foundationalism and the previous version of para-foundationalism), *extendability* does not hold because the first conjunct of the formula for **[E]** (namely  $y \neq x$ ) is not satisfied. On the contrary, if **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both self-identical and not self-identical (as discussed in the present Section), the first conjunct of the formula for **[E]** is both satisfied and not. Therefore, both **[E]** and **[¬E]** hold.

Let's sum up. On the one hand, when the *foundational element* (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is just characterized as what determines entities as entities, we have a form of para-foundationalism in which **[AR]** and its negation, and **[AS]** and its negation, hold. Moreover, **[E]** holds but not **[¬E]**. On the other hand, when the *foundational element* (**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**) is understood as *being self-identical*, we have a particularly extreme form of para-foundationalism. Such a new form is stronger than the previous one for two main reasons. First of all, it has more inconsistent structural features: beside the features of the previous version of para-foundationalism, it has also the structural property **[E]** and its negation. Secondly, it is more radical than the previous form of para-foundationalism because it is inconsistent on that specific structural property, namely **[E]**, the negation of which was meant to characterize all forms of foundationalism.<sup>3</sup> This second form of para-foundationalism shows that all forms of foundationalism do not have **[E]**, even though, in some extreme forms, both **[E]** and its negation hold. Finally, from both forms of para-foundationalism also follows a new consideration about Heidegger's account of (PSR). In the case of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, Heidegger has correctly claimed that (PSR) cannot unrestrictedly hold. As we have seen, if we interpret the principle 'nothing is without a reason' as 'nothing is without a ground', there is, at least an element, namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, for which (PSR) does not hold: indeed, **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded. **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is without any reason. However, according to both forms of para-foundationalism, this is not the case anymore. As we have seen, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is inconsistent, it is both ungrounded and self-grounded. On the one hand, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is ungrounded, it is without any reason. Therefore, (PSR) fails. On the other hand, because **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is grounded (or, more precisely, self-grounded), it has a reason (namely itself). Since all entities

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<sup>3</sup>This is true because if we have the structural property **[E]**, it follows that it is impossible to have *foundational elements*. Since foundationalism is characterized as the view according to which there are *foundational elements*, **[E]** is incompatible with foundationalism.

are grounded in **Being<sub>MET</sub>** and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** is both ungrounded and self-grounded, all entities have a reason in **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** has its reason in itself. Even though something (namely **Being<sub>MET</sub>**) both has a reason and not, it is still true that everything has a reason. Therefore, (PSR) holds.

## 5.5 **Being<sub>MET</sub>** as *the last God*

Before concluding, it may be interesting to point out that the present discussion about **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (with its entailed foundationalism) and **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (with its entailed para-foundationalism) can help us to have some new insights into one of the most enigmatic figures of Heidegger's philosophy, that is *the last God*.

Very often, at least in the Western philosophical tradition, the ground of all entities (or the reason why human beings, trees, sun sets, stars, planets and everything else *are*) goes under the name of God. For instance, according to Aquinas, "God wills the existence of all things" (cf. Lovejoy, 2001, p.319) while, according to Leibniz, God is the Perfection Prior, which generates the world as a necessary logical consequence of his essential nature (cf. Lovejoy, 2001, p.319). Schelling believes that God is that eternal realization [*Realwerden*] or *Genesis* of the world (cf. Lovejoy, 2001, p.320) while Meister Eckhart (who highly influenced Heidegger) thinks that God is the ground [*Grund\**] of everything. Even though, in all these cases, God is thought of as the universal ground, Heidegger has never borrowed any term from theology. His conception of the universal ground always goes under the name of '**Being<sub>MET</sub>**' or '**Being<sub>MET</sub>**'. The reason for his divorce from the theological tradition is clearly explained in *Phenomenology and Theology* (1967). Since Heidegger holds the idea that the ground of every entity is not an entity itself, he thinks that God cannot be such a universal ground because, in the theological framework, God is treated as an entity, namely as something that *is*. God *is* what wills, generates or realizes every thing; god *is* the ground of all entities. Of course, God is not a normal entity among entities. For instance, God is eternal and normal entities are not. Even more simply, God is the ground of all entities while a normal entity (such as a table) is not. So, even though God is often conceptualized as a *super-ens*, God is still thought of as an *ens*. Since we refer to God, God is an entity, and this is why we can pray to *Yahweh*, we can make war in the name of *Christ*, and we can distinguish what is wrong from what is right following the commandments of *Allah*. We refer to

God because, in the first place, God is treated as an entity. Such an account of God is incompatible with the Heideggerian assumption that the ground of everything is not an entity and, from this, also follows the necessity of separating God (the *super-ens*) from **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**), which is not an *ens*. Therefore, “**Being<sub>MET</sub>** [or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is not God” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.303). In Heidegger’s jargon, we could say that theology is ultimately an *onto*-theology, namely the study of the divine element as an entity. “Both ontology [the study of entities] and theology are ‘-logy’ [or sciences] because they are concerned with the attempt at explaining *entities*” (Heidegger, 1967, p.225). This is also the reason why Heidegger claims that theology is just like any other kind of science: it deals with God as an ‘object of study’ while the ground of all entities is not an object at all. Therefore, God is inappropriate as a characterization of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

Having said that, the approach proposed by Heidegger in *Phenomenology and Theology* (1967) does not seem to hold for the whole trajectory of his philosophy. Indeed, in *Contributions to Philosophy* (1989a), Heidegger himself returns to theology accepting what he calls the *last God*. Unfortunately, he does not give any clear account of what the *last God* really is. On the one hand, we know that it is not simply “another God [*der Letzte Gott*]” because it is “different from both the old traditional Gods and the Christian God” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.394). The *last God* is characterized, using Hölderlin’s expression, as the “closest one” but, at the same time, “the most difficult to understand” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.396). On the other hand, we also know that the *last God* is tightly connected with the idea of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** because “the truth of beyng [**Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**] is the truth of the *last God*” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.396). Since Heidegger never rejected his condemnation of theology, at this point, some questions look inevitable: how can Heidegger hold the position that ‘God’ cannot be another name to refer to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**, believing, at the same time, that the *last God* is actually a synonym of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**? And, if so, what is the difference between the traditional account of God and the *last God*? These questions remain unanswered.

One possible way of making sense of the thoughts expressed in *Contributions to Philosophy* (1989a) is to appeal to para-foundationalism. The *last God* may be interpreted as the dialethic *foundational element* that we have called **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. If this is the case, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or the *last God*) is not an entity, Heidegger can still maintain his previous critique against theology. On the other hand, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is also an

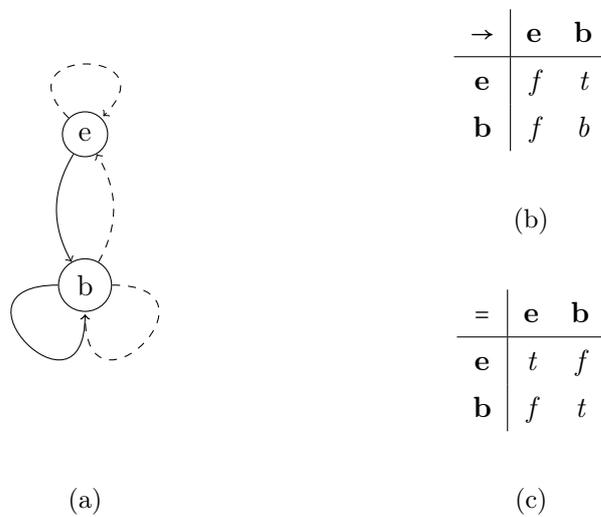
entity, it is actually possible to refer to it as God because, consistently with the theological tradition, God is that entity in virtue of which everything is. From this point of view, the *last God* is the “closest one” (Heidegger, 1989a, 396) because it is an entity and the world of human beings is constituted by entities. Entities are the things we are most familiar with. Nonetheless, the *last God* is also “the most difficult to understand” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.396) because it is not an entity as well and, as we have seen, what is not an entity leads to an aporia, which is accepted as true in the para-foundationalist view. So, “the closest proximity to the *last God* is the event of (...) its rejection” (Heidegger, 1989a, p.402). The *last God* is phenomenologically present when it is not or, more precisely, it is present when it is absent. It is present *and* it is not. On the one hand, it is present as all the other entities are: the *last God* is present to the mind of the people thinking or speculating about it and, thus, referring to it. On the other hand, the *last God* is *not* present as well: since it is not an entity and everything that is phenomenologically present is an entity, the *last God* cannot be phenomenologically present. So, if it is true that ‘only a God can save us’ (cf. Safranski, 1998), given Heidegger’s metaphysics, this God has to be the *last* one. It has to be the God that grounds everything including itself without being grounded at all.

## 5.6 Technical Appendix

Someone could worry that the two inconsistent theories of grounding, exactly in virtue of the fact that they are contradictory, fall into logical triviality. The following two models (one for each kind of para-foundationalism) show that this is not the case. These models are set up using a first-order interpretation for the paraconsistent logic *LP* (Priest, 1979). For a full and detailed description of this interpretation see Appendix 3 of chapter 3. In order to show that para-foundationalism 1.0 and para-foundationalism 2.0 are not trivial, we adopt the following strategy. First of all, we confirm that all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 and para-foundationalism 2.0 hold in the relative models. This means that these structural properties take either value **t** (true) or value **b** (both true and false). Secondly, we show that there is at least one sentence which takes value **f** (false).

Let’s start discussing the **model of para-foundationalism 1.0**. To define such a model  $M_{PF1.0} = \langle D, V \rangle$ , let the domain of interpretation  $D$  be  $\{e, b\}$ . As in the graphs

presented above,  $e$  represents an entity and  $b$  represents **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.  $V(\rightarrow)$  and  $V(=)$  are as described in table (b) and table (c). As we can see in the picture below, comparing the graph (a), which represents para-foundationalism 1.0, and table (b), entity  $e$  does not depend on itself ( $e \rightarrow e$  is false) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**  $b$  does not depend on entity  $e$  either ( $b \rightarrow e$  is false). However, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ( $e \rightarrow b$  is true) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** both depends and does not depend on itself ( $b \rightarrow b$  is both true and false). Moreover, as it is clear comparing the graph (a) and table (b), identity behaves in a consistent way. Thus, both entity  $e$  and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are self-identical ( $e = e$  and  $b = b$  are true) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not identical to entity  $e$  ( $b = e$  is false).



At this point, it is easy to show that, in our model, the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 (namely, **[AR]**, **[¬AR]**, **[AS]**, **[¬AS]**, **[¬E]**) hold, taking either value **t** or value **b**. Let's see. For *Anti-Reflexivity* (**[AR]**:  $\forall x \neg x \rightarrow x$ ), we consider all the possible values of  $x$ :

- $V\neg(e \rightarrow e) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V\neg(b \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{b}$

As it is clearly understandable looking at graph (a), it is true that entity  $e$  does not depend on itself and it is both true and false that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself. In all cases, **[AR]** holds. For the negation of *Anti-Reflexivity* (**[¬AR]**:  $\exists x(x \rightarrow x)$ ), it is enough to consider one value of  $x$  for which **[¬AR]** holds. As we have already noticed from graph (a), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and it does not depend on itself. Thus,  $V(b \rightarrow b)$  takes

value **b**. For *Anti-Symmetry* ([AS]:  $\forall x\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset \neg y \rightarrow x)$ ), we consider all the possible values of  $x$  and  $y$ :

- $V(e \rightarrow b \supset \neg b \rightarrow e) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(b \rightarrow e \supset \neg e \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(e \rightarrow e \supset \neg e \rightarrow e) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(b \rightarrow b \supset \neg b \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{b}$

The fact that *Anti-Symmetry* holds is intuitively understandable from graph (a) as well. First of all, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** but **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on entity  $e$ . Secondly, even considering the case where  $x$  is  $y$ , entity  $e$  does not depend on itself and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does and does not depend on itself. Thus, [AS] holds. For the negation of *Anti-Symmetry* ( $\neg$ AS]:  $\exists x\exists y(x \rightarrow y \wedge y \rightarrow x)$ ), it is enough to show that there is at least a value of  $x$  and a value of  $y$  for which  $\neg$ AS] takes value **t** or **b**. Now, as it is shown by graph (a), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself and does not. Thus,  $V(b \rightarrow b \supset \neg b \rightarrow b)$  takes value **b**.  $\neg$ AS] holds as well. Finally, let's consider the last structural property of para-foundationalism 1.0. For the negation of *Extendability* ( $\neg$  E]:  $\exists x\forall y(x \rightarrow y \supset x = y)$ ), we consider all the values of  $y$  and at least one value of  $x$  for which  $\neg$  E] takes either value **t** or value **b**:

- $V(b \rightarrow b \supset b = b) = \mathbf{t}$
- $V(b \rightarrow e \supset b = e) = \mathbf{t}$

As we can see,  $\neg$  E] holds. Indeed, since the negation of *Extendability* claims that something does not depend on anything else, from graph (a) it is clear that, on the one hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends and does not depend on itself; on the other hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything else other than itself.

At this point we know that all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 hold. In order to show that the model presented here is not trivial, we need to show that there is a sentence which is false only. This is not difficult because, as we have already argued, we know that, in this first kind of para-foundationalism, *Extendability* [E] does not hold. Indeed, as graph (a) shows, it is false that everything depends on something else: for instance, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does and does not depend on itself. In both cases, it does

not depend on something else. Thus, in  $M_{PF1.0}$ ,  $\forall x \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$  is false because  $V(-b = b \wedge b \rightarrow b)$  takes value **f**.

Now, what about **a model of para-foundationalism 2.0**? This second model,  $M_{PF2.0}$ , is not very different than the one presented above and it is defined as  $\langle D, V \rangle$ . As in the previous case, the domain of interpretation  $D$  is  $\{e, b\}$  where  $e$  represents an entity and  $b$  represents **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** while  $V(\rightarrow)$  is as described in table (b). This is the case because para-foundationalism 2.0 has exactly the same features of para-foundationalism 1.0: in both cases, entity  $e$  does not depend on itself ( $e \rightarrow e$  is false) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**  $b$  does not depend on entity  $e$  either ( $b \rightarrow e$  is false). Moreover, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** ( $e \rightarrow b$  is true) and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** both depends and does not depend on itself ( $b \rightarrow b$  is both true and false). What is different is that, in para-foundationalism 1.0, both entity  $e$  and **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** are self-identical (as table (c) shows,  $e = e$  and  $b = b$  are true) while, in para-foundationalism 2.0, even though entity  $e$  is still self-identical ( $e = e$  still takes value **t**), **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both self-identical and not ( $b = b$  takes value **b**). Thus, for para-foundationalism 2.0,  $V(=)$  is described by the following table:

$=$	<b>e</b>	<b>b</b>
<b>e</b>	<i>t</i>	<i>f</i>
<b>b</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>b</i>

At this point, as we have done before, we start checking if all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 2.0 (**[AR]**, **[-AR]**, **[AS]**, **[-AS]**, **[E]** and **[-E]**) hold, taking either value **t** or value **b**. This is not difficult because para-foundationalism 2.0 has exactly the same structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 plus **[E]**. This means that, since we already know that all the structural properties of para-foundationalism 1.0 hold, we only need to check *Extendability*.<sup>4</sup> According to *Extendability*, everything depends on something else. On the one hand, entity  $e$  depends on **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. On the other hand, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** both depends and does not depend on itself. In this second case, it may seem that *Extendability* does not hold: indeed, in this model, either **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not depend on anything or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** depends on itself. In both cases, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** does not

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<sup>4</sup>We need to check only *Extendability* because the only thing that changed from para-foundationalism 1.0 to para-foundationalism 2.0 is the behavior of identity. Since, beside *Extendability*, all the other structural properties (already verified in para-foundationalism 1.0) do not make use of identity, they are verified in para-foundationalism 2.0 too.

depend on anything else. However, we should not forget that, in para-foundationalism 2.0,  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  is not self-identical. This means that, when  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  depends on itself, because  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  is *also* not itself (because  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  is *also* not self-identical),  $\mathbf{Beyng}_{\mathbf{MET}}$  depends on something other than itself. This is reason why *Extendability* holds. Formally, for [E]:  $\forall x \exists y (y \neq x \wedge x \rightarrow y)$ , we consider all the values of  $x$  and at least one value of  $y$  for which [E] takes either value  $\mathbf{t}$  or value  $\mathbf{b}$ :

- $V(-b = b \wedge b \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{b}$
- $V(-e = b \wedge e \rightarrow b) = \mathbf{t}$

As expected, [E] holds. To conclude, we show that, also in para-foundationalism 2.0, there is a sentence which is simply false. In this model, since entity  $e$  does not depend on itself, it must be false that everything depends on itself. Indeed, in  $M_{PF2.0}$ , the sentence  $\forall x x \rightarrow x$  is simply false because  $V(e \rightarrow e)$  takes value  $\mathbf{f}$ .

## Chapter 6

# Afterword

To conclude, let's summarize what we have done.

In the first chapter, we defended a new interpretation of the so-called second Heidegger, namely Heidegger after the *Kehre*. We introduced the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and we showed how thinking and talking about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** leads to a paradox. Following Heidegger himself, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity and everything we refer to is an entity, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not: it is not an entity (because of the ontological difference) and it is an entity (because we refer to it in saying that being is not an entity). At this point, we endorsed the interpretation according to which Heidegger accepts the contradiction implied by **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** as true. Finally, we showed that this dialethic interpretation of the second Heidegger also casts a new light on obscure and often unintelligible Heideggerian concepts such as the event, *Aletheia* and his understanding of negation.

In the second chapter, we compared Heidegger's metaphysics with Meinong's metaphysics discussing both the similarity and the differences between the two philosophers. Such a comparison delivers a better understanding of Heidegger's intentionality and Heidegger's paradox of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. It also casts a new light on one of the most unintelligible part of Meinong's philosophy, namely defective objects.

In the third chapter, we discussed Heidegger's understanding of nothingness, and we presented his argument according to which nothingness is identical to **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. We

also developed a paraconsistent mereological system in which the complement of the totality (interpreted as **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness) has the same inconsistent features as Heidegger's **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness. The totality is taken to be the fusion of everything that is.

In the fourth and last chapter, we presented Heidegger's account of grounding, according to which **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** grounds everything without being grounded. After that, in the light of the interpretation presented in chapter 1, we showed how Heidegger should have revised his grounding theory in order to do justice to the idea that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity.

The present work is mainly focused on Heidegger's answer to the question of being developed after the *Kehre*. As such, a great part of both his philosophy (for instance, his philosophical thesis about the origin of the work of art, poetry and technology) and his interpretations of Nietzsche, Heraclitus and Plato are not considered. I believe that the interpretation defended here will cast a new light also on parts of Heidegger's thought that are not directly address in this work. I hope to address these matters in future work.

## Chapter 7

# Glossary

**Anwesenheit:** ‘presence’. In *Being and time* (1927), this term is used to identify entities that are ‘stable’ or ‘concretely present’. He inherits this term from Aristotle (cf. Heidegger, 1993) and it refers to the essence (*οὐσία*) of all things. Only after *Being and time* and starting from the courses given in Marburg (namely in his later period), Heidegger associates **Anwesenheit** to the German term **Präsenz**, namely the way in which entities stay in front of a subject. Consistently with the phenomenological tradition, all entities that are represented by a subject (or by the mental activities of a subject) are *present* – they have presence. As it is argued in the first chapter of the present work (pp. 16-18) and since we are mainly concerned with Heidegger’s philosophy after *Being and time*, we always interpret **Anwesenheit** as **Präsenz**.

**Augenblick:** ‘instant’. With this term, according to his phenomenology of the *Dasein*, Heidegger refers to a very specific moment of time in which the human beings authentically realize themselves in asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. Even though this term finds its theoretical formulation in *Being and time* (1927, p. 397-414), Heidegger inherits it from both the Aristotelian and the Christian tradition. Indeed, Aristotle characterizes the instant as the good or profitable moment to act (cf. Heidegger, 1993) while Saint Paul thinks that the instant (namely what uniquely matters in a Christian life) is the moment in which Christ came to redeem the world (cf. Heidegger, 1995). In the late part of his philosophical trajectory, Heidegger considers the instant as the moment of the event [*Ereignis*], namely when the *Dasein* understands that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity (cf. Heidegger, 1957; Heidegger, 1989a). For more

details, see pages 30 and 31 of the present work.

***Dasein***: ‘human being’. This is one of the few terms that never changed meaning during the whole career of Heidegger. According to Heidegger, ***Dasein*** is the ontological constitution of the human being. Only human beings can have the full understanding of their position in the world (of their own *being-in-the-world* [*in-der-Welt-sein*]) because their being (their way of being [*Sein*] or, in Heidegger’s terminology, their existence) is characterized by the possibility of asking the question of **Being<sub>MET</sub>** or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** [*Seinsfrage*]. Only in the late Heidegger and, in particular, in his *Contributions to philosophy* (1989a), ***Dasein*** is actually able to answer this question, participating to the even of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** [*Ereignis*]. This is shown in the first chapter of the present work (pp. 24-32).

***Ereignis***: ‘event’. This term was employed by Heidegger from the beginning of his career: as Volpi points out (2010), it is possible to find it in some manuscripts dated 1919. In *Being and time* (1927), the ‘event’ refers to a specific experience which a subject lives in first person. For instance, given the framework proposed in *Being and time*, when human beings love, pray, fight, they are part of an ‘event’, which is concerned with their own personal, subjective experience. This characterization of the event is counter-posed to *Vorgang*, namely a mechanical ‘circumstance’ in which human beings (with their personal experiences) are not an essential part. For instance, a ‘circumstance’ (*Vorgang*) is a natural or physical process: a stone that falls or a wave that crashes against the cliff. In the second part of his philosophical trajectory, Heidegger uses the term ‘event’ with a new meaning. As it is shown by a handwritten note on a margin of the first edition of his *Letter on Humanism* (collected in Heidegger, 1967, pp. 267-317), the ‘event’ becomes a crucial idea in his attempt at answering the question of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. In *Contributions to Philosophy*, the ‘event’ is the moment in which ***Dasein*** understands and accepts the contradictory nature of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**. For more details, see Section 1.3 of the first chapter in the present work.

***Erzitterung***: ‘vibration’ or ‘oscillation’. In *Contributions to philosophy*, Heidegger describes ***Ereignis*** as a vibration or an oscillation. According to the interpretation presented in the first chapter of the present work (pp.24-32), ***Ereignis*** is the vibration of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** between the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (because of the onto-

logical difference) and the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity (because we can refer to it). As we have pointed out, this oscillation is just a metaphor to describe how the contradiction of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood and, ultimately, accepted as the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself. Such an oscillation or vibration has been formally described by the paraconsistent mereological systems presented in Chapter 3 (pp.93-100), according to which the complement of the totality (namely **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** and nothingness) is both an entity and not an entity. In particular, see theorems (9a) and (9b). It is also interesting to notice that, in German, *Erzitterung* can mean ‘earthquake’. As Heidegger claims at the beginning of his *Contributions to philosophy* (cf. 1989a, p. 121), the realization that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is both an entity and not an entity can have the effect of an earthquake in shaking the idea that contradictions are always unacceptable.

**Existenz**: ‘existence’. This term appears for the first time in *Being and time* (1927) and it is uniquely used to characterize the mode of being of *Dasein* (namely the human being). This means that Heidegger’s *Existenz* has a different meaning than the traditional latin expression *existentia*, which refers to the property of *being real* or *being material*. Indeed, *Existenz* means the unique way in which the human being dwells in the world (for more details, see Section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). Moreover, the human being is the only entity that properly exists because, according to Heidegger, the human being is the only entity that can interrogate and question the world he or she is in, asking the question of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** (or **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**).

**Grund**: ‘reason’. In German, **Grund** means the bottom of something (for instance, the bottom of a glass). However, Heidegger uses this word to refer to the metaphysical reason in virtue of which everything is an entity. As we have claimed in Section 1.1 of the present work, all entities are entities because they are grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**; thus, **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is the **Grund** of all entities. In the *Principle of Reason* (1957), Heidegger starts to write **Grund** as **Abgrund**, namely a groundless ground (or, in other terms, an **Un-ground** or a *non-ground*). As we have argued in the last chapter of the present work, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is (also) not an entity and since everything that is an entity is grounded in **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** too, then **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** itself is ungrounded because it is not an entity.

**Kehre**: ‘turn’. In German, this term refers to the mountain hairpins but Heidegger uses it to indicate the turn in his thought, that happens at the beginning of the 1930s. Given the interpretation presented in this work, such a turn corresponds to the development of the *Ereignis* and the endorsement of the dialethic solution to the problem of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

**Seiendsein**: ‘being an entity’. This term perfectly describes the meaning of *Sein*, namely the ‘being an entity of an entity’. Unfortunately, it is not often used by Heidegger himself and it appears only in a short gloss in an essay entitled ‘Hegel and the Greeks’ (collected in Heidegger, 1967).

**Selbstheit**: ‘being itself’. In *Identity and Difference* (1957a), Heidegger suggests that this term is a synonymous of *Sein*. As we argue in Section 2.1.3, this understanding of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is similar to the interpretation given by Priest (2014c) of the Meinongian *Außersein*. Everything that is an entity has *Sein* or it is grounded in *Sein*; moreover, since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is interpreted as *being self-identical* too, every entity, in virtue of its *begin an entity*, is identical to itself – it is self-identical.

**Sinn**: ‘meaning’. From *Being and time* (cf, 1927, pp.183-189; pp.384-392), this term is understood in an existential way. According to Heidegger, human beings understand the ‘meaning’ of something (a fact, an event or a thought) if and only if human beings experience what they are trying to understand. This is true for the late Heidegger as well: in the *Contributions to philosophy* (1989a), the *Dasein* can understand the truth of **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** only through the personal experience of thinking about it. The oscillation between the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is an entity and the fact that **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is not an entity (namely the *Erzitterung*) is realized if and only if *Dasein* thinks about **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>**.

**Welt**: ‘world’. This term was used for the first time in *Being and time* (1927, pp. 333-334): this first characterization of the ‘world’ is developed in relation to the phenomenological description of *Dasein*. Thus, the world is understood as the space dwelled or inhabited by *Dasein*. In the late Heidegger, this term changes its meaning. As it is discussed in *The origin of the work of art* and *The essence of the ground* (collected

in Heidegger, 1967), the world is understood as the collection of all entities (including ideas, numbers, feelings and nonexistent objects) – everything that is an entity is in the world. Formally, we have described Heidegger’s account of the world as the mereological sum of everything that is self-identical. Indeed, since all entities are entities in virtue of **Being<sub>MET</sub>**, and since **Beyng<sub>MET</sub>** is understood as *being self-identical*, then all entities are self-identical. Moreover, since the world contains all entities (namely everything that is self-identical), in Chapter 3 we have characterized the world exactly as the collection of everything that is self-identical (or, more formally, as the least upper bound of the self-identicals). See pp. 87-93.

**Wirklichkeit:** ‘being real’ or ‘being material’. This term is used in *Being and time* (1927, p.120 and p. 253). It is a synonym of the latin word *realitas*, namely what is real or material. *Sachheit* is the property in virtue of which something is in the world as something that is concretely present (see the term *Welt\** in the Glossary).



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